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A

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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TORONTO

A History of The British Army

BY

THE HON. J. W. FORTESCUE, LL.D. EDIN.

HONORARY FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

*FROM THE EXPEDITION TO EGYPT, 1807, TO THE
BATTLE OF CORUÑA, JANUARY 1809*

VOL. VI

1807-1809

Quae caret ora cruento nostro?

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I AM indebted to Colonel Love's *History of the Madras Engineers* for the map of Vellore.

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MAPS AND PLANS

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2. Vellore.
3. N.E. Zealand, Copenhagen (two Maps on one sheet).
4. Rolica.
5. Vimeiro.
6. Coruña.
7. Moore's Campaign, Eastern Sphere.
8. Moore's Campaign, Western Sphere.
9. Spain and Portugal (General Map).

(For Europe at the Peace of Tilsit, see Vol. V. Map 17.)

CHAPTER XIV

ONCE again we return to Europe at the close of the 1806. year 1806, a Europe still ringing with the crash of Prussia's downfall. On the 22nd of October, eight Oct. 22. days after Jena, an emissary from King Frederick William arrived before Napoleon's headquarters to beg for peace. The Emperor's terms were hard. Prussia must separate herself from Russia, shut her ports to England, yield to France her possessions west of the Rhine, place Hanover and the Hanse towns at Napoleon's disposal, hand over Magdeburg to a French garrison pending payment of an indemnity of four millions sterling, and march with France against Russia if the Tsar should invade the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. Frederick William would have accepted these degrading conditions ; but his fortresses were throwing open their gates with shameful readiness to the feeblest French detachments, and Napoleon saw no reason why he should not press still harder upon Prussia. The Tsar, as we have seen, had chosen this unfortunate moment to quarrel with Turkey. The disagreement was the work of Sebastiani, who had so alarmed the Turks with the spectre of Marmont's army, that the Sultan had removed the Russian leaders in Moldavia and Wallachia and replaced them by partisans of the French. The Russian ambassador at Constantinople thereupon announced that the armies of his master would occupy those principalities ; and a Russian force shortly afterwards marched into them, entering Jassy on the 14th of November. Here

1806. therefore was open war between Russia and Turkey, wherein England as Russia's ally must necessarily be involved, with the result that the strength which should have been turned against France was likely to be wasted against the Ottoman Empire.

Nothing could better have suited Napoleon ; and fate was kind enough to give him still further aid towards the accomplishment of his ends. The overthrow of Prussia had turned every head in Prussian Poland. From Posen to Warsaw the Poles hailed the Emperor as their liberator and rushed enthusiastically to arms. Napoleon was too shrewd to let pass such an opportunity. An independent Poland signified the integrity of Turkey, and that integrity signified the preponderance of France in the Mediterranean. He promptly encouraged the movement, supplying the insurgents with Prussian arms, yet carefully avoiding to commit himself to any definite engagement on their behalf. All was now in good train for his great design, namely the separation of Russia from England, and the isolation of England by a Continental coalition.

Oct. 27. On the 27th of October he entered Berlin, and girded himself for a succession of heavy blows against his enemies. Prussia was the first sufferer. Napoleon was resolved that she should never trouble him in arms again. Far from granting his former terms, he would not concede even an armistice without occupying all Prussia to the line of the Elbe, as well as her principal fortresses on the Vistula and in Silesia and all the provinces on the right bank of the Oder. The terms were accepted from sheer helplessness by Frederick

Nov. 16. William's emissaries on the 16th of November ; but the King himself, receiving from the Tsar an assurance of support by an army of one hundred and forty thousand men, made his way to the Russian headquarters at Pultusk and resolved to fight to the end. Hitherto Napoleon had not gone further in hostility against the Royal family of Prussia than to cover the Queen with base insults in his public bulletins. He

now prepared a decree for the dethronement of the 1806. House of Brandenburg, which he kept in reserve until the right moment for publication.

Spain was the next power to feel the Emperor's displeasure. Godoy's overtures to England became known to him at Berlin; and though, in deference to the abject apology of the Prince of the Peace, no serious notice was taken of them, yet from that moment Napoleon vowed to destroy, in his own good time, the Spanish branch of the house of Bourbon. Meanwhile he summoned the Spanish fleet to Toulon, sent five-and-twenty thousand Prussian prisoners to Spain to be subsisted at Spanish expense and, as a measure of prudence, ordered fifteen thousand of the best Spanish troops to march to the Elbe. We shall shortly meet with these troops again, first on the Baltic and later during Sir John Moore's retreat on Coruña, for they formed the corps which is best remembered by the name of its commander, Marquis de la Romana.

Then came the turn of England. The Fifteenth Bulletin of the Grand Army had announced on the 22nd of October that the time was coming for proclaiming a Continental blockade against her; and on the 22nd of Nov. 22. November that thunderbolt was finally launched. The preamble of the celebrated Berlin Decrees was long; its executive clause was brief. "The British Isles are declared to be in a state of blockade. All commerce and correspondence with them are forbidden." "I have reason to hope that this measure will strike England to the heart," wrote Napoleon on the same day to Cambacérès.¹ He did not apprehend that the weapon would in due time recoil upon himself.

Lastly, Russia was to be severed from England by sheer force of arms. All had gone well with Napoleon in Germany. The Elector of Saxony, Dec. 11. bribed by the title of King and by the hope of a share of Poland, entered the Confederation of the Rhine, and bound himself to furnish a contingent of twenty

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 11,289.

1806. thousand men. The five Dukes of Saxony followed his example. All therefore was quiet in Napoleon's rear; and, with Poland and Turkey to distract Russia on either flank, he could advance with confidence. But the campaign was different from any that the French army had as yet experienced. The land was miserably poor, and the inhabitants were hostile. Intelligence, forage, victuals were alike un procurable. Manœuvres were quite impossible and marches almost impossible in the sea of mud which covered the country. By great exertions the French army came up with the Russians, Dec. 26. and on the 26th of December at Pultusk met for the first time with something that much resembled a repulse. Further prosecution of the campaign was for the present out of the question; and both armies went into winter-quarters.

It now remained to see what help the British could give to their allies in the struggle. There could be no question during the winter of despatching a British force to the Baltic; and, owing to the call for troops in South America, no great number of infantry could be spared from any quarter. But the little army which had conquered at Maida was still free to take the field. With a considerable reinforcement of cavalry, of which there was plenty to spare in England, and a few more battalions of infantry, it could be raised to a strength sufficient to make a formidable diversion. In Upper Italy there were few French troops, the bulk of them having been drawn off to form Marmont's army of Dalmatia; and in the Kingdom of Naples there were not above five-and-twenty thousand men, including Neapolitans in the French service. There were two ways in which a British force could have been effectively employed for relief of Russia. If raised to a strength of twenty thousand men, it might have landed at Leghorn or even further north; in which case Marmont's corps, which by all accounts was designed to invade Russia from the south, must certainly have been held back to meet it. If limited to ten thousand men, which number

was actually ready at Messina, it might have sailed to 1806. Constantinople with a powerful fleet, and very possibly have overawed the Sultan into concession of the Russian demands. But the British Ministers, unfortunately, took no such broad view of the duty required of them. Even as Pitt before them, they refused to see that any military operation which did not immediately and directly contribute to the general object of destroying the supremacy of France, was a mere stroke in the air. They were possessed by the idea that Napoleon meditated the occupation of Egypt, and were intent, from sheer jealousy, upon being beforehand with him. They never reflected that his former invasion of Egypt had been the escapade of a desperate man, that it had been a disastrous failure, and that nothing was more to be desired than the squandering of French troops in remote lands, where there was no French fleet to protect them. Hence the Government's action at all critical moments was apt to be both feeble and futile.

On the 21st of November Ministers sent most secret Nov. 21. orders to General Fox at Palermo to the following effect. The preamble stated that the late proceedings of the Porte called for immediate notice. Collingwood had therefore been directed to detach five ships of the Mediterranean fleet for the purpose of taking up an offensive position against Constantinople ; and Fox himself was to hold five thousand men in readiness to sail to Egypt as soon as the naval officer before Constantinople should report the outbreak of hostilities. The object of the expedition, however, was the conquest not of Egypt, but of Alexandria only, in order to prevent the French from gaining a new footing, and to uphold the party friendly to the British in the country. The commander of the troops must therefore be a man of talent in political as well as military matters, for his interference in the political dissensions of Egypt would be inevitable. “ But,” so ran the closing sentence of the instructions, “ the precise line which it will be proper for him to

1806. take in the exercise of such interference would be difficult at this time to point out." This clause was exactly in the style of Henry Dundas. The instructions to all intent amounted to this. "We send you with five thousand men to Egypt, where your object will be the capture of Alexandria only. You are not to occupy the country, but you are to make British influence preponderant in it. How you are to do so we do not know ; but our reason for sending five thousand troops is that we are not disposed to risk more in the pursuit of our object." There could be no more perfect example of the art of misemploying the limited military forces of England.

1807. The instructions to Collingwood did not reach him until the 12th of January 1807, when as soon as possible he despatched Duckworth to Constantinople with eight ships instead of five, requesting the Russian Admiral, Siniavin, who was cruising in the Greek Archipelago, to add to them four more from his squadron. Duckworth's orders were to demand the surrender of the Turkish fleet, and to enforce, under menace of a cannonade of the city, compliance with the British Ambassador's demands for the dismissal of Sebastiani and for concession of the claims of Russia.

Feb. 19. On the 19th of February Duckworth passed up the Dardanelles, and found that the Ambassador had already been compelled to fly from Constantinople. He destroyed a few small vessels of the Turkish squadron with comparatively little loss ; and on the

Mar. 3. 3rd of March, after spending the intervening days in addressing pompous letters to the Porte, he sailed down again. But the forts, which by the energy of Sebastiani had been manned and armed, fired heavily upon his ships as he retired ; and the squadron anchored at the mouth of the straits with several vessels much damaged, and over one hundred and sixty men killed and wounded. Here Duckworth met Siniavin, who offered to join him with the whole of his own eight ships ; but the British Admiral declined ; and therewith

the great naval demonstration against Constantinople 1807. came to an end. It was a total failure, mainly because the ships were not supported by a military force, though Duckworth cannot be said to have shown either ability or resolution. Its only result was to heighten the fame of Sebastiani, who had stimulated the Porte to resistance, and to revive the lost reputation of the Turks as a fighting people.

On the 18th of February¹ General Fox received Feb. 18. news of the flight of the British Ambassador from Constantinople, whereupon he at once embarked a force of six thousand of all ranks,² two-thirds of whom were British and the remainder foreigners in the British service. He would gladly have sent Moore in command of them, but for the fact that he himself was helpless without that officer; and it was extremely unfortunate that he did not. To find a substitute for Moore was not easy; but, in view of Windham's directions that the commander must be a man of political as well as military ability, Fox selected the most popular officer in his army. This was Major-general Fraser Mackenzie, a frank, straightforward, and honourable gentleman of very good plain sense, but without the slightest knowledge of the higher branches of political or military science. His second in command was Major-general Wauchope, a brave and excellent officer within the narrow sphere of regimental duty, but unequal to greater things,

¹ Fox to Sec. of State, 4th March 1807.

² Embarkation return of 21st Feb. —

20th L.D.	.	.	.	4 officers	74 n.c.o. and men.	
R.A.	.	.	.	9 "	173 "	"
R.E.	.	.	.	2 "	4 "	"
Staff corps	.	.	.	1 "	15 "	"
31st Foot	.	.	.	42 "	970 "	"
1 and 2/35th	.	.	.	60 "	1518 "	"
2/78th	.	.	.	39 "	736 "	"
De Roll's	.	.	.	32 "	729 "	"
Chasseurs Britanniques	29			"	905 "	"
5 cos. Sicilians	.	.	24	"	548 "	"
				<u>242</u>	<u>5672</u>	

1807. and therefore unable to supplement the defects of his chief. For nearly a month the troops remained embarked, awaiting convoy, until at last on the 5th of March Captain Hallowell of the *Tigre* arrived at March 6. Messina. On the following day the expedition sailed for Alexandria.

The condition of Egypt since the expulsion of the French army by the British in 1801 had grown more and more anarchic. The British Ministers, when they found the country thrown upon their hands, tried in vain to arrange some form of government which would satisfy both the Turks, who claimed suzerainty, and the Mameluke Beys, who were the actual rulers; but, even as the French before them, they found that any arrangement but a restoration of the Beys to their original powers would be fruitless. The Turks, on the other hand, having obtained a footing in the land, were resolved upon solving all difficulties by extirpation of the Mamelukes, root and branch. The British Government twice sent General John Stuart to Constantinople to endeavour to mediate between the two parties, before the British army should quit Egypt; but the Porte, being aware that the evacuation must inevitably take place very shortly, was stubborn in resisting all proposals of conciliation. Beys and Turks had come to blows early in 1802, always with advantage to the former; but in August, while Stuart was engaged on his second mission to Constantinople, hostilities were for a short while suspended. Stuart delayed the departure of the last detachment of British troops for some time in order to preserve the means of putting pressure on the Turks; but in October 1802 the position was complicated by the arrival of Sebastiani, whose mission was nominally to inquire why the evacuation had been so long deferred, but really, as was strongly suspected, to re-establish French influence in Egypt.

Meanwhile the civil war was renewed, always with success to the Mamelukes. But their numbers were small and could only be recruited by the importation

of slaves, the supply of which could be cut off by the Turks ; and they pressed more and more earnestly for British mediation. Stuart never ceased to ply the Turks with suggestions and propositions, dreading always that Sebastiani might succeed where he failed, or, still worse, that the Mamelukes might be gained as the friends of the French. The Turkish authorities were immovable ; and at last in despair Stuart went to the camp of the Beys and prevailed with them to retire southward from the Delta to Upper Egypt, there to await the issue of the negotiations which the British Ambassador was still prosecuting on their behalf at Constantinople. This done, on the 11th of March 1803 the last of the British troops embarked from Alexandria for Malta ; and effective British intervention in the affairs of the country became from that moment impossible.

Upon leaving the country Stuart appointed Major Missett, lately his Military Secretary, to remain in Cairo as British Agent. Missett was described by a brother officer as clever, vain, impatient, and busy with schemes for re-establishing British influence.¹ The description would seem to be accurate, except that his cleverness included no power of judgment, and did not exclude a large element of credulity. Missett had the misfortune to be a cripple, which possibly made his mind the more active and his self-importance the more pronounced, but reduced him to the lamentable necessity of trusting to the reports of agents instead of to his own observation. He had not been long installed before a mutiny of the Albanian troops drove the Turks from Cairo ; July. whereupon the Beys, coming down country, rallied the mutineers to their own standard, captured Damietta and Rosetta, took the Turkish Viceroy prisoner, and reduced Turkish domination to the solitary stronghold of Alexandria. Both parties were now in a position to call in foreign aid, though the Turks, having command of the sea, were still the stronger. Towards the end

¹ Bunbury, p. 285.

1803. of July there arrived a new Viceroy, Ali Pasha, from Turkey. He, however, was not more successful than his predecessor, for he suffered himself to be entrapped 1804. by the Mamelukes at Cairo, where his force was Jan. destroyed and himself after a short captivity beheaded.

The triumph of the Mamelukes seemed thus to be assured, but meanwhile there was a French party and an English party among the Beys themselves ; and Missett and his rival M. de Lesseps became preternaturally active in their midst. Lesseps, after informing them that the French fleet in the Mediterranean was positively destined for Egypt, invited them to receive the French troops as friends, since Napoleon desired not an occupation of the country, but merely a convenient passage to India. This overture, which was simply a device of the First Consul to decoy Nelson's fleet to the eastern Mediterranean, threw Missett into a fever. Through the influence of Stuart, one of the Mameluke leaders, by name Elfi Bey, had been persuaded in the previous year to visit England, where he had been entertained with much attention, and had even been received by the King at Windsor. A man-of-war was provided to take him back to Egypt, where he duly arrived on the 10th of February 1804, together with ten dozen bottles of milk-punch, the purchase of which appears to have been the most solid result of his visit to the West.¹ Missett counted greatly upon Elfi's reappearance to strengthen his own influence ; but to his dismay Osman Bey Bardissi, the leader of the French party among the Mamelukes, attempted to assassinate Elfi as soon as he landed, and forced him to fly for his life into the desert. There followed a period of wild anarchy. The Albanians mutinied against the Mamelukes and drove them from Cairo ; Osman and Elfi came to open war ; the Bedouins seized the moment for a

¹ Capt. Hallowell, R.N., to the Admiralty, 31st Dec. 1803. Hallowell was very glad to get rid of Elfi, whom he describes as a child in whims and caprices, "constant to nothing but his pipe." Do. to do., 3rd Feb. 1804.

raid ; and all was distraction. Now, however, there 1804. emerged the man who in secret was the true spring of all these movements. Whether through the reaction of French revolutionary ideas upon the Ottoman Empire, or through the weakness of the Sultan, there sprang up at this period in almost every Turkish province aspirants to independent rule. Such was, to name one among many, Ali Pasha of Janina in Albania ; and such was Mohammed Ali, the Albanian leader in Egypt. He had set Mamelukes and Albanians against Turks, Mamelukes against Mamelukes, and finally Albanians against Mamelukes ; and by the end of March Missett reported confidently that he was aiming at independence, with the support, if not actually at the instigation, of Lesseps.¹

Steadily, though not without occasional checks from the Mamelukes, Mohammed Ali strengthened his position during 1804 ; and Missett was in despair, for the Albanian leader's devotion to France would, as he conceived, be fatal to British ascendancy. The Mamelukes took the alarm ; and Elfi begged for British mediation and for three or four thousand British troops to restore order.² Early in 1805 the Porte sent reinforcements to Egypt with the idea of crushing first the Mamelukes and then the Albanians ; but Mohammed Ali frustrated all hopes by marching on Cairo, where he besieged the Turkish Viceroy, and was acclaimed by his Albanians as Viceroy in the other's stead. Hopeless of overthrowing him, the Porte, in July, confirmed him July. in his new dignity ; and Missett, foreseeing that Mohammed Ali would shortly take possession of Alexandria and favour French interests there, urged that a British frigate might be sent to the harbour.³ Furiously jealous, Elfi Bey then made interest with the Porte for the expulsion of the Albanians and for the redelivery of

¹ Missett to Sec. of State, 6th, 12th, 16th, 18th, 29th March, 13th May 1804.

² Missett to Sec. of State, 5th Aug., 3rd Sept. 1804.

³ Missett to Sec. of State, 18th Sept. 1805.

1804. Egypt to the Mamelukes; and a Turkish fleet and Aug. army actually arrived at Alexandria early in August to enforce this policy. Mohammed Ali, strong in the support of the French agent, defied them both. Twelve months later his position was strengthened by a stroke of luck, for the rival Beys, Osman Bardissi and Elfi, died within a few weeks of each other at the end of 1806 and beginning of 1807. The new Viceroy's power, therefore, in January 1807 bade fair to be finally consolidated. For four years, upon every change in the very changeable scene of Egyptian anarchy, Missett had begged for British troops to save the situation. The moment chosen by Ministers to despatch those troops was just when a strong man, hostile to British interests, was beginning to hold the country in his hand. The only weak point was Alexandria, which, though not in a position to resist Mohammed Ali, was still held by a Turkish Governor and a handful of Turkish troops. However, no sooner did Missett hear that Fraser had sailed from Malta than he hastened to inform the Beys that the government of the country should be restored to them; and this, although he had no instructions to do anything of the kind, and had long before written strongly to the Cabinet that the Mamelukes were not to be trusted.¹

Mar. 7. Misfortune dogged the unhappy British expedition from the first. On the night after it left Messina nineteen out of thirty-three sail of transports parted company with headquarters in a gale, and Fraser

Mar. 16. arrived before Alexandria on the 16th of March in the *Tigre* with no more than two thousand out of his six thousand men. Hallowell anchored his convoy to westward of the port; and the Governor of Alexandria, though the Turkish garrison numbered but two hundred and fifty men, closed the gates of the city against him. Missett, however, pressed the General to land at once and seize the place before Mohammed

¹ Missett to Sec. of State, 10th Oct. 1804; Fraser to S.S., 27th March 1807.

Ali's Albanians could arrive from Rosetta to reinforce 1807. it. He represented that the population was favourable to the British, and that the Governor was wavering between the dread of an insurrection and the influence of the French consul, who had sent messengers to summon the Albanians. After some hesitation Fraser decided to accept the risk. A heavy surf was running on the shore, and the expedition had been provided with no special boats for disembarkation ; but the energy of Captain Hallowell overcame all difficulties. On the evening of the 17th a few hundred men were landed Mar. 17. a few miles east of Marabout ; and on the morning of the 18th the number was increased, with great Mar. 18. difficulty and risk, to a thousand, when the surf became so violent as to suspend all further operations. Fraser therefore found himself literally stranded with a mere handful of men. Missett pressed him, none the less, to immediate action, which in the circumstances was probably the wisest course ; and on the evening of the 18th Fraser moved towards the city. The Turks opened fire upon him with their old cannon from some ruined fortifications as he advanced ; but they were driven away with little difficulty or loss ; and the column pursued its way to Pompey's Gate near the southern angle of the walls.¹ The gate, however, was barricaded ; volleys of musketry were discharged from the walls ; and there was no sign of assistance from the populace, which had been represented by Missett to be friendly to the British. Fraser, with great good sense, marched round the town and occupied the positions held by Abercromby in the battle of the 21st of March 1801. Throwing troops into the Castle of Aboukir, and stationing others on the cut between Lakes Mahadieh and Mareotis, he barred the two routes by which alone the Albanians could penetrate from Rosetta to Alexandria, and secured a safe disembarkation for the remainder of his army. Early on

¹ The troops engaged were 1/35th, De Roll's and the Sicilian Volunteers. The casualties were seven killed and ten wounded.

1807. the 20th the *Apollo* frigate, together with the missing Mar. 20. transports, anchored in the Bay of Aboukir; and in the course of the day Alexandria surrendered by capitulation.¹

The object of the expedition was thus ostensibly accomplished; and the arrival of Duckworth's squadron Mar. 22. on the 22nd made security doubly sure. But Fraser was still absolutely without guidance to decide whether it was his duty to assist the Mamelukes to drive out the Albanians, as Missett had led the Beys to expect. However, his attention was soon distracted by other Mar. 23. matters, for on the 23rd he was amazed to hear from Missett that Alexandria was on the verge of famine. There was, according to the Agent's account, barely a fortnight's grain for the population within the walls; after the consumption of which the people must starve, and the army must live on salt provisions from the transports. Alexandria, he explained, depended upon the country about Rosetta for cereals, and about Rahmanieh for cattle; wherefore he entreated the General to seize these places without delay, and of course to hold them when taken.² In all of his many representations to the Government Missett had made no mention of this circumstance, though if his statement were true in 1807, it must have been equally true in 1803. In actual fact, as subsequent events were to show, it was not true; though it is difficult to say whether Missett alleged it in good faith, in which case he was utterly unfit to be consul, or whether he used this argument, knowing it to be false, as a lever to move Fraser to more extensive operations. From the extremely lame excuse which he offered later on for his mistake, there is every reason to suppose that the latter is the true explanation.³ But at any rate Fraser's

¹ Fraser to Sec. of State, 25th March 1807; Bunbury, pp. 288-290.

² Missett to Fraser, 23rd March, in Missett to Sec. of State of same date.

³ Missett to Sec. of State, 29th April 1807.

position was most difficult. He was specially instructed 1807. to confine his conquest to Alexandria ; and yet the Agent, who from long residence had every means of knowing the truth, insisted that, without the conquest of Rosetta and Rahmanieh, the retention of Alexandria was impossible. It was true that, according to Missett, the defences of Rosetta were contemptible, and the Albanians a mere savage rabble. But the place was forty miles distant from Alexandria, while Rahmanieh was even more remote ; and to hold these two positions as well as the city itself and to ensure the communication between them, was a task beyond the strength of Fraser's very moderate force.

It was difficult for him, however, not to yield to Missett's representations. A strong man, such as Moore, would probably either have awed the Agent into the discovery of supplies, or evacuated Alexandria upon the spot; but Fraser most reluctantly gave way, and ordered Meade's brigade of the Thirty-first and the Chasseurs Britanniques, numbering something under sixteen hundred of all ranks, with two six-pounders and two small howitzers, to march directly upon Rosetta. To command so small a detachment one general officer might have seemed amply sufficient ; but Fraser in an evil moment sent Wauchope also to accompany it. Sir John Moore in Sicily when he heard of the expedition saw its faults at once. "I wish," he wrote, "that instead of sending a detachment of fourteen hundred men to Rosetta and Rahmanieh, Fraser had left a few hundred men to guard Alexandria, Aboukir, and the cut, and marched there himself with the body of his force."¹ But Fraser was unfortunately not a Moore. The little column started on the 29th of March, and on the 31st reached the heights of Aboumandour, which Mar. 31. overlook Rosetta. The town was perfectly still ; the gates stood open and not a defender was to be seen on the walls. According to Missett's information the garrison might number five hundred or possibly so

¹ *Diary of Sir John Moore*, ii. 167.

1807. many as two thousand ; but nothing was really known Mar. 31. of the number of the Albanians, whether they were ready or unready, inclined or disinclined for resistance ; and Wauchope was content to know nothing. Without precaution or reconnaissance, he led his column blindly into the narrow streets and alleys of an Oriental town.

Of what then passed the accounts are contradictory. All that is certain is that the troops were suddenly overwhelmed, as at Buenos Ayres, by a storm of fire from invisible enemies at every window and on every house-top. Wauchope, fortunately for himself, was shot dead. Meade was dangerously wounded in the head ; and Lieutenant-colonel Bruce, taking command, immediately ordered a retreat. According to Missett's agent, however, the town was actually taken ; the garrison had fled across the Nile in boats, on boards, and on pieces of wood ; the agent himself had ordered dinner for the British officers ; and the British soldiers were sitting quietly in small groups in the shops and coffee-houses when the retreat was sounded. The Secretary to Missett's mission, who was also present, averred on the contrary that the panic and confusion were such that, in spite of his protests, Bruce insisted on a precipitate retreat. Missett, in his indignation over the failure, sent both of these accounts home, without perceiving that they were contradictory ; but it is at least strange that a couple of Levantines, people who are not generally remarkable for courage, should have shown such astonishing coolness when British officers, according to these narratives, lost their heads. I therefore reject both of these stories in the main, though it may well be that some few of the garrison took to flight ; and I prefer the testimony of British officers, who had every means for arriving at the truth. According to them, the conduct of the troops was beyond praise. There was no panic ; they retired in good order to the hills without the town, carrying their wounded with them ; and the Albanians, who followed them in savage pursuit, though they did

indeed cut off a few stragglers, could make no impression upon the main body. So firm was the countenance of Bruce's men that, the first fury of the enemy once spent, they effected their retreat to Aboukir without molestation. Out of a total strength of sixteen to seventeen hundred of all ranks, more than one in ten had been killed outright, and over four hundred and sixty had fallen.¹ 1807.
Mar. 31.

This was a severe blow to British influence; and the actual loss of men was in the circumstances most serious. Missett's importunity, however, became greater rather than less after the mishap. Famine in Alexandria was, he repeated, certain unless Rosetta were in British hands; and he brought forward the chief magistrates of the city to bear witness to his accuracy. Moreover, he assured the General that the Mamelukes, evading the forces of Mohammed Ali, were in full march to join the British in an attack on Rosetta. Fraser, much troubled, delivered his soul in a piteous letter to Windham. "My instructions tell me," he wrote in effect, "that the possession of Alexandria is my chief object. But we are at war with the Porte, a fact which seems to have escaped the notice both of the Government and Missett, so that we have the whole force of the country, both Turks and Albanians, to contend with. They know perfectly well how

¹ 31st, 1 officer and 75 men killed; 7 officers and 137 men wounded.

Chasseurs Britanniques, 2 officers and 104 men killed; 10 officers and 115 men wounded.

Total (including staff and artillery), 4 officers and 181 men killed; 19 officers and 263 men wounded.

The disembarkation returns give the strength of the 31st at 42 officers and 970 men; and of the Chasseurs Britanniques at 29 officers and 905 men. But the light companies of both had been detached for formation into a Light Battalion, and with sickness and other casualties this strength must have been reduced, at a very modest computation, by at least two hundred men. Fraser reported the brigade to be 1400 rank and file.

Missett to Sec. of State, 12th April, 17th June, 21st Oct. 1807; Fraser to Sec. of State, 6th April 1807; Bunbury, pp. 293-294.

1807. critical is our position, and will do their best to cut off our supplies. Moreover, we are still in the dark as to the part that the Mamelukes will play. There are twelve thousand Albanians besides Turks in the service of the Porte in Egypt, and Missett reports so many more Albanians to be entering by way of Damietta, that a ship must be stationed there to prevent it. The Admiral, however, has no ship fit for such service. This will show how the condition of the country has been misconceived and how our difficulties have been multiplied." It is small wonder that he ended his letter with an appeal for precise instructions, for it is still impossible to divine for what purpose he was sent to Alexandria.¹

Meanwhile, if famine were to be averted and the lost reputation of the British were to be retrieved, it was necessary to make another attempt upon Rosetta. That success should in this instance be assured, Fraser set apart for the service two thousand five hundred men, with eleven guns of various calibres, under the command of Brigadiers William Stewart and John

April 3. Oswald.² The column started on the 3rd of April, arrived at the wells of Aboukir on the 4th, and, after a most distressing march in a hot southerly wind,

April 5. reached the village of Edko on the 5th. Reconnaissance showed that the Albanians had posted a strong detachment at El Hamed, a village situated about four miles south of Rosetta on a neck of land between the Nile and Lake Edko. Stewart, judging it necessary to hold this position in order to secure his right flank and rear, as also his communication with Edko, during his operations against Rosetta, sent a detachment to seize it. The service was performed with ease; the Albanians, chiefly cavalry, giving way after little show of resistance.

¹ Fraser to Sec. of State, 6th April 1807.

² 20th L.D. R.A. 1/35th, 2/78th.

L.I. battalion, De Roll's, 200 seamen.

Artillery, 2 twelve-pounders, 6 six-pounders, 1 three-pounder, one 4½ in., and one 8½ in. howitzers.

The post was then entrusted to Major Vogelsang with 1807. three hundred men of De Roll's, his duty being to April 7. watch the isthmus between Lake Edko and the Nile. This space was from two to three miles broad, but was covered along great part of its extent by a watercourse with high embankments, designed to carry off the inundations of the river into Lake Edko. A tolerably strong position was thus afforded to a defending force, for there were only two roadways through the dykes ; the one at El Hamed itself and the other close upon the bank of the river, both of which were of course occupied by Vogelsang, with one gun upon each. On the western side of the isthmus the dykes came to an end, leaving open half a mile of dry sandy plain, which was perfectly practicable for cavalry. This weak point, however, gave Stewart little anxiety, for he counted on the speedy arrival of the Mamelukes, who would secure him from all danger in that quarter.

The main body of the British in the meantime advanced to Rosetta, and, establishing itself in the sand-hills close to the walls, gradually brought up its mortars and heavy guns. The force, however, being too small to invest the place completely, the Albanians made frequent sorties, though with little effect ; while from the walls the defenders kept up a constant fire of musketry, which likewise did trifling damage. On the other hand the enemy took small notice of shot or shell, while one of their batteries greatly annoyed the right flank of the British lines. On the night of the 16th April 16. Major Macdonnel of the Seventy-eighth with two hundred of his Highlanders and forty seamen crossed the river quietly in the darkness, came in upon the rear of the obnoxious battery, dispersed the Albanians who held it, and, after firing several shots into the town, brought away the guns and camels with a loss of only four wounded. Setting aside this gallant and well-conducted exploit, the siege made little progress. There was no sign of the approach of the Mamelukes ; but on the other hand reinforcements began to join the

1807. Albanians from Damietta. There was also observed on the west bank of the river, over against El Hamed, a large body of Turkish cavalry, which on the 19th crossed the river and fell upon one of Vogelsang's posts, while simultaneously the garrison of Rosetta made a strong sortie against the left of the besiegers' lines. Both attacks were beaten back, but Stewart, growing anxious over these offensive movements, on the same evening reinforced Vogelsang with the light companies of the Thirty-fifth and De Roll's, under Captain Tarleton of the former regiment, with instructions to drive the Turkish horse to the eastern bank of the river. Next April 20. morning at daylight Tarleton advanced with this object, but, finding the enemy far too strong for him, retired towards the dykes. He was, however, so imprudent as to divide his force while still in the open plain, directing the company of De Roll's upon El Hamed, and leading his own company towards the post on the Nile. The Turks at once galloped up, surrounded De Roll's men, and charging them from every side almost annihilated them. Seventy-three of this unlucky party were left dead upon the field, and five only escaped into the village.

The news of this mishap reached Stewart at eleven o'clock, when he at once sent Colonel Macleod of the Seventy-eighth, with three companies,¹ a few dragoons, and a field-gun, to take command at El Hamed. Upon the approach of this reinforcement the Turkish horse retired to south-eastward; and before nightfall Macleod reported his position to be perfectly secure. His force was disposed as follows. On the right, watching the plain towards Lake Edko, were two companies of the Thirty-fifth and one of the Seventy-eighth with a three-pounder under Tarleton; in the centre were two companies of De Roll's with another three-pounder under Major Mohr; and on the left, adjoining the Nile, were two more companies of the Seventy-eighth and the remainder of De Roll's with a six-pounder,

¹ Two companies of the Seventy-eighth, and one of the Thirty-fifth.

under Vogelsang and Macleod in person.¹ Stewart, 1807. however, was still uneasy; and early in the night he April 20. visited El Hamed himself to give his final orders. These were to the effect that the position should be held stoutly if there were a fair chance of success, but that, if the enemy proved to be too strong, Macleod's detachment was to join Mohr's, after which the two combined were to unite with Tarleton, and so retreat over the plain in one body, hugging the shore of Lake Edko, and thus securing at least one of their flanks. Stewart had, in fact, made up his mind to raise the siege and retire to Aboukir on the following morning, intending that his own column should unite with Macleod's at the eastern corner of the lake. These wise and soldier-like resolutions were unfortunately taken twenty-four hours too late.

Leaving El Hamed at two o'clock in the morning of the 21st, Stewart found the plain swarming with April 21. Turkish cavalry, and only escaped from them by the speed of his horse. Not long afterwards information was brought to him that a fleet of large native boats was coming down the Nile with reinforcements for the enemy; and at daybreak nearly one hundred of these craft were descried about half a mile above El Hamed, together with two square-rigged vessels, each mounting four or five guns. Macleod at once reported the fact to Stewart; but the Turkish cavalry was scouring the plain; and it was impossible to send a messenger, or any but a really strong reinforcement, in reply. Stewart, without a moment's delay, set his sick, his wounded, and the best of his stores on camels, and sent them

¹ Bunbury's comment on this disposition (p. 300, n.), that the corps were strangely mixed up, is vitiated by the fact that he adds to Macleod's post on the left a company of the Thirty-fifth which was not there. It is certainly strange that Macleod should not have kept all three of his own companies of the Seventy-eighth together; but on the other hand Tarleton's post was that of greatest danger, and a Colonel of Highlanders would probably imagine that the presence of his grenadier-company would make any post secure.

1807. off under escort of the remnant of the Seventy-eighth April 21. and De Roll's, protecting the movement by a heavy cannonade until they had retired to some distance. Then destroying his heavy guns under the bayonets of seven companies of the Thirty-fifth, he made over these companies and three more of the Light Battalion to Oswald, to cover the retreat of the main body. The Albanians and Turkish horse at once sallied out from every gate, but were unable to make the slightest impression upon either column. "Nothing," wrote Stewart, "could surpass the steadiness of the troops." De Roll's and the Seventy-eighth, closing in oblong formation round the camels, repulsed every attack. The Thirty-fifth, being engaged with the Albanian marksmen, suffered more heavily, but never lost their order for a moment. By one o'clock both parties had reached Lake Edko. The enemy abandoned their futile attacks, which had cost the British rather more than one hundred killed and wounded;¹ and Stewart looked anxiously eastward for the detachment from El Hamed. Seeing nothing of it, he advanced somewhat towards the village, but could perceive only that the adjoining heights were covered by Albanian infantry and that the plain was swarming with Turkish horse. Very reluctantly he pursued his retreat to Edko, where he halted for the night.²

The fate of Macleod's detachment is more difficult to relate, for no two witnesses agreed in their narrative. The one unfortunate fact which seems certain is that Macleod lost his head. He saw at once that the post by the river must be immediately abandoned if it were not to be overwhelmed by the fire of the enemy's gunboats; but, instead of obeying Stewart's orders to retreat along the dyke, he sent Vogelsang with

¹ 5 men killed; 4 officers and 95 men wounded; of whom 2 officers and 62 men belonged to the 35th.

² Stewart to Fraser, 21st April, in Fraser to Sec. of State, 1st May 1807. Bunbury's narrative is founded wholly on this report, supplemented probably by conversation with Stewart.

one gun and the three companies from the left of the 1807. defences to a sandhill, about three quarters of a mile April 21. in rear of the centre. He then rode away to the right, and, as he passed Mohr, directed him to withdraw the company that held El Hamed. Again hastening on to the right, he hurried Tarleton's three companies down to join Mohr. But, before they could do so, large bodies of Turkish horse galloped down to right and left of them ; while the Albanian infantry from the boats rushed into the abandoned village of El Hamed and opened fire upon Mohr's men from the top of the dyke. Macleod then formed Tarleton's three companies into two sides of a triangle with the apex towards the south, resting their rear upon the dyke, so as to keep the cavalry at bay ; but they also were exposed to a destructive fire from the Albanian infantry in their rear, and suffered heavy loss. Presently Macleod sent orders for Mohr's men, who likewise were in a sorry plight, to join Vogelsang on the sandhill ; and immediately afterwards he seems to have been killed. The two parties under Tarleton and Mohr then appear to have joined in one disorderly rush towards the hill ; but with the Albanians pressing their rear, and the Turkish cavalry charging on every side, only four or five men reached it. Nor when gained was the position of the slightest advantage. Vogelsang's men, isolated and disheartened though they were, still fought on for a time surrounded by thousands of enemies, until at last one of the field-guns just captured from the British was brought up to play upon them. Then suddenly Vogelsang cried out, "Cease firing, cease firing," and rushed forward waving a white handkerchief. The Turkish cavalry at once galloped in upon the survivors from every side, cut down the few who still resisted, and made prisoners of the remainder. The whole detachment at El Hamed numbered thirty-six officers and seven hundred and eighty men ; and of these not a man escaped. Twelve officers and two hundred and eighty men were killed

1807. outright ; and the remainder, most of them wounded, April 21. were spared indeed but captured.¹

It was not unnatural that the expedition should have ended in disaster, for from beginning to end it was an example of dispersion of forces. The Cabinet sent six thousand men to Alexandria for a vague object which it could not define. The General found, upon the showing of the Cabinet's trusted adviser at Alexandria, that he could not fulfil even the letter of his instructions without detaching part of his force to besiege Rosetta. Very reluctantly he did so ; and the officer commanding the detachment found that he could not besiege Rosetta without detaching part of his force to El Hamed. Finally the field-officer in command at El Hamed, in the teeth of superior orders, detached half of his tiny force to an isolated position for some vague object known only to himself. Fraser and Stewart can hardly be blamed, for they were pressed by sheer necessity. Poor Macleod paid for his mistakes with his life, but nothing less could have atoned for them ; for if Stewart could draw off an unwieldy convoy of sick, wounded, and stores across the open plain with sixteen hundred men, Macleod should surely have been able to do the like with an unencumbered column of eight hundred. But the truth appears to be that his troops had no confidence in him ; nor is this surprising, for he showed neither vigilance nor caution to anticipate danger, and when he suddenly awoke to his situation, ruined everything by hurried and faulty dispositions. Missett averred that the troops became despondent because the enemy had been seen to behead the wounded after the first mishap at Rosetta ;² and it is unquestionable that the mutilation of the wounded, or even of the dead, may produce a strong moral effect upon defeated troops. But the two regiments of Meade's brigade took no part in the second attack on Rosetta ; and Stewart's men, composed

¹ Bunbury, pp. 303-305 ; Narrative of Capt. Delancey in Fox to Sec. of State, 13th June 1807.

² Missett to Sec. of State, 18th May 1807.

of the very regiments from which Macleod's detachment was drawn, showed no sign of giving way. Even De Roll's, which on the 20th had lost a company cut to pieces, without, by all accounts, offering any great resistance, behaved admirably under Stewart's command. Fraser, indeed, acquitted Stewart of all responsibility for the disaster, as it seems with perfect justice. The whole of the blame must therefore rest upon Macleod.

The defeat was most disgraceful, for the very Mamelukes despised the Albanians, whom they had hunted from the field fifty times; and it is not surprising that it led to unpleasant passages between Missett and Fraser. A hint, however, of the General's intention to evacuate Egypt startled the Agent into a sudden consciousness that, if there were no corn in Alexandria, there was at least plenty of rice, and that the Arabs could probably be induced to bring in wheat and barley. The Mamelukes, too, still talked of moving northward to join Fraser, having actually beaten Mohammed Ali at Assiout. But in May a confidential messenger came from Mohammed Ali to ask the General, as well he might, what were really the British Government's intentions as to Egypt. He had seen a letter written by Fraser to the Beys, upon the first landing of the British, to the effect that Britain desired not to conquer the country, but only to occupy Alexandria, exclude the French, and protect such parties as were friendly to herself; and it had no doubt occurred to him that, by satisfying these modest expectations, he might further his own designs of an independent sovereignty. He strengthened his case by sending in a British officer, who reported that he and his brother prisoners, nearly five hundred in all, were extremely well treated, thanks to the French Consul M. Drovetti, to whom Fraser lost no time in expressing his deepest gratitude. The officer also intimated that according to his information, which was doubtless carefully inspired by Mohammed Ali, the Mamelukes had come to terms with the Viceroy. The General replied to the Pasha that if the

1807. prisoners were released, supplies allowed to come in, May. and free passage granted for trade between Alexandria, Rosetta, and Cairo, he would not interfere with the government of Egypt, but would feel disposed to grant any favour in his power. Now the favour that Mohammed Ali particularly desired was a supply of ready cash. Such an accommodation was by no means unwelcome to an anxious and harassed officer, who had lost nearly one-third of his force to no purpose, who still believed that what remained of it was in danger of starvation, and who had been informed by his chief engineer, a very promising officer named Captain John Burgoyne, that the perimeter of Alexandria was great, its fortifications contemptible, and its present garrison wholly insufficient for security.¹

May 25. On the 25th of May two battalions, the Twenty-first and Sixty-second, arrived with two victualling ships from Malta to set Fraser's mind at rest. For a month the enemy remained in force about El Hamed and Rosetta, but after the middle of May the British outposts were not approached even by small parties. The Beys continued to send messages expressive of their devotion to the British; but the time for such amenities was past; and, since supplies were easily and abundantly procurable, Fraser abandoned all thought of further operations, devoting the best of his energy to negotiation for the recovery of the prisoners.

Meanwhile, as shall presently be told, Castlereagh had replaced Windham at the War Office, owing to a change of administration. On receiving Missett's reports as to the necessity for holding Rosetta and Rahmanieh, the new Minister perceived at once that the occupation of Alexandria was likely to drain the army in the Mediterranean more heavily than had been expected. He therefore repeated the sense of former

¹ Missett to Sec. of State, 22nd, 29th April, 18th May; Fraser to Sec. of State, 6th, 16th, 21st May 1807; Capt. Hallowell to Collingwood, 21st May, in Collingwood to Admiralty 23rd June 1807.

instructions, that Fraser must on no account attempt ^{1807.} to hold more country than was absolutely necessary for subsistence, nor engage himself to the Mamelukes or to any other party to drive the Turks from Cairo. The news of the two failures at Rosetta shortly afterwards made it clear to Castlereagh that, if Alexandria were to be kept, Sicily must be abandoned. There could be no question that, with such an alternative, Egypt must be sacrificed ; and Fox was therefore directed to evacuate the country at once. The order reached Sicily on the 10th of July, but, since a new Ambassador, Sir Arthur Paget, was on his way to Constantinople at the time, the General thought it expedient to delay the withdrawal of the troops until he should have reached the Dardanelles. However, on the 3rd of September Fraser received an intimation ^{Sept. 3.} from Paget that he might leave Egypt ; and after a short parley Mohammed Ali released the British prisoners, promising, moreover, an amnesty to any inhabitants of Alexandria who had favoured the British cause. The Pasha's behaviour towards his captives was described by Fraser as "truly noble," for he took the trouble to seek out and recover even the soldiers who had been enslaved and carried far up the country. It is abundantly evident that the General felt far more kindly towards the Albanian leader than towards the Mamelukes whom Missett had chosen for his allies.

On the 19th the evacuation was completed, and the ^{Sept. 19.} troops, augmented to a strength of nearly eight thousand of all ranks, returned to Sicily. Missett followed them within a month, apparently thinking himself insecure at Alexandria. The Mamelukes had taken to fighting among themselves, and nine Beys had fallen in the conflict. Four years were still to elapse before the Mamelukes were to be finally annihilated by Mohammed Ali's orders in the great massacre at the citadel of Cairo ; but Missett was doubtless justified in describing them in October 1807 as practically extinct. The Agent's last action as such was to forward more

1807. documents in proof of the contention that the first attack on Rosetta had been successful, and that the British had retreated when they were actually in possession of the town. He did not perceive that, even if this were true, it did not exonerate him from the responsibility of forcing the army into operations which it had been expressly forbidden to undertake. However, we need not grudge to so small a man the satisfaction of the last word in the controversy, and may take leave of him, in spite of all the mischief which he had done, with compassionate contempt.¹

So ended this foolish and disastrous enterprise ; but its evil consequences, far from being bounded by the defeat of the army in the field, extended to the whole of the Mediterranean. The Queen of Naples had 1806. contrived by the end of 1806 to oust Sir John Acton from his post of chief adviser to the King, and to install in his place the Marquis Circello, who was a pliant instrument in her hands. This done, she proceeded, as was her wont, to play a double game. Inflamed by the news that the Tsar continued to defy Napoleon, she put great pressure both on Mr. Drummond, who had lately assumed the post of British Minister at Palermo, and on General Fox, to undertake an immediate expedition for the recovery of the Calabrias, if not of Naples itself. Drummond very properly referred the matter to Fox, who sent Moore to Palermo to explain that he was extremely unwilling to engage in any enterprise without orders from home, and even more unwilling to share in any projects planned by the Queen. Drummond declared himself quite convinced of the soundness of the General's view, and did not hesitate to express a strongly unfavourable opinion of the Queen and of her favourites. Probably Her Majesty anticipated some such reply, for while awaiting its arrival, she was

¹ Sec. of State to Fox, 17th May, 14th June ; Moore to Sec. of State, 13th July ; Fraser to Sec. of State, 19th, 30th May, 16th June, 11th July, 26th Sept. ; Missett to Sec. of State, 17th June, 23rd July, 21st Oct. ; Collingwood to Admiralty, 20th July 1807.

suspected to have invited the Russians to occupy Sicily ; and, on learning that the Tsar had hampered himself by a war with Turkey, she actually offered in January 1807 to betray Sicily into Napoleon's hands, if only he would restore to her Naples.

Though the intrigues of the Queen with Napoleon did not come to Fox's knowledge until several weeks later,¹ it will readily be understood that the relations between the General and the Court of Naples were not improved by these passages ; and this was a serious matter, for the Court was able to present obstacles, which could not be ignored, to an effective defence of Sicily. One of the most important objects entrusted to Drummond was the negotiation of a treaty between Great Britain and His Sicilian Majesty, which should provide at once for reforms in the government of the island and for placing all its fortresses under the command of British officers. The Queen and Circello naturally resisted this latter proposal with every resource in their power ; but, since Drummond was for the moment firm in insisting that Her Majesty should be excluded from the Council of administration, the cunning woman consented outwardly to efface herself, though only to work the more busily through Circello and other of her creatures in forwarding her own schemes. Fox, either with his own eyes or with Moore's saw clearly through her designs. "We can never hold a safe footing in Sicily," he wrote, "while the Queen is in it, and her agents and spies continue in high places. English influence is daily losing ground from our powerlessness to remedy abuses ; and the Sicilians despair of any reform in their own government."²

Such was the state of affairs when, by Windham's orders, six thousand of the Sicilian garrison were despatched to Egypt. Apart from the actual withdrawal

¹ Collingwood became aware of them in March, as is shown by his letter to Mr. T. Grenville of 28th March. The information came to him by way of Spain, so probably did not reach Fox until April.

² Fox to S.S., 9th Feb., 13th March 1807.

1807. of the British troops, whom she detested, the Queen was able in another way also to turn the event to her advantage. Until the end of January Sidney Smith had remained in command of the naval force on the Sicilian station, working incessantly as the obedient slave of that pestilent woman, to thwart the British Minister and the British Generals. Drummond, not unnaturally, resented Smith's interference most bitterly, and wrote of him to Fox in terms of positive abomination.¹ But, when this vainest of Admirals was ordered to join Duckworth in the Dardanelles, the Queen turned the artillery of her guile upon Drummond himself, and in an absurdly brief period not only reduced him to submission, but attached him firmly to her service in opposition to Fox and Moore. The news of Napoleon's check at Pultusk, magnified by report into an actual defeat, had lately reached Palermo; and the Court, readily jumping to the conclusion that the bulk of the French troops had been withdrawn from the Neapolitan dominions to the north, renewed its importunities for an immediate attempt to recover Naples. Presumably the miserable intriguers reckoned either upon bringing about the defeat of the British and throwing themselves into the arms of Napoleon, or upon expelling the French from Naples with the help of British battalions, and then requesting these last to withdraw from the country. Be that as it may, Drummond, who had opposed any such request in January, supported it in March with all the vigour in his power. Yet, as he knew perfectly well, the arguments against the scheme, which had been valid in January, were now of redoubled potency. Not only had a large proportion of the British troops been detached to Egypt, but very serious and unexpected trouble had lately shown itself in Malta.

A certain M. de Montjoye, under the assumed name of Count de Froberg, had received a commission to enlist a regiment of foreigners for the British service. Making Constantinople his headquarters, he contrived,

¹ Bunbury, p. 442.

by means which would have disgraced the most rapacious of crimps, to collect about a thousand men of various nations, chiefly Greeks and wild Albanians, and, having brought them from thence to Malta, where they were quartered in Fort Ricasoli, subjected them to the most brutal treatment. Stealthily and quietly they prepared a plot to effect their escape ; but, finding that the Adjutant had an inkling of the plan, five hundred of them broke suddenly into tumultuous revolt on the afternoon of the 4th of April. They killed the Adjutant and another officer, wounded three more, forced the guard at the gate, raised the drawbridge of the fort, tore the British colours to pieces, and hoisted the Russian flag. They then imprisoned the rest of their officers, compelled the gunners to turn their cannon on the town, and swore that they would fire unless they were at once embarked on Russian ships and sent back to their own country. The situation was serious, for there was another foreign regiment of doubtful fidelity in the island, as well as a thousand French prisoners. General Villettes, the commander-in-chief, however, knowing that the insurgents had but one day's provisions in the fort, blockaded them within it, and threatened to turn every gun in the island upon them if they discharged a single cannon. On the morning of the 8th the majority opened the gate and surrendered unconditionally ; but about twenty Albanians and Bulgarians still held out, declaring that they would blow up the magazine and perish with it, unless the Governor undertook to embark them at once in Greek or Russian vessels. Villettes would hear of no terms ; but the Maltese were smitten with such panic that he accepted the offer of the best men in the regiment to escalade the fort. They did so without loss on the 11th, but captured only two of the mutineers, five or six having retired to the magazine, and the rest having already made their escape. On the same day Villettes tried and executed twenty-four of the ring-leaders ; and on the evening of the 12th the handful of desperate men in the fort blew up the magazine, killing

1807. three soldiers and making a large breach in the walls towards the sea, but doing little other damage. Fox, after enquiry, disbanded the corps, discharged all the men who had been improperly enlisted and sent them to Corfu. He then drafted the remainder into other foreign corps, not forgetting at the same time to make an example of the officers, who had been the worst offenders in levying the corps ; and so this very dangerous incident passed away without further mischief.¹

However, the immediate effect was that one entire corps of the Mediterranean garrison was lost, and that Fox was obliged to weaken the force in Sicily by sending a battalion² to restore confidence in Malta. In such circumstances it was not surprising that he refused utterly to have anything to do with the projected expedition to Naples. "If ever the blow is struck," he wrote to Windham, "it must be struck suddenly and by the British alone. The state of the Cabinet of Palermo is such that its secrets reach Naples as fast as a felucca can carry them." But the intelligence from all parts of Europe was of a kind to raise the hopes of the Bourbons of Naples to the highest pitch. On the 29th of January Napoleon had renewed his campaign

Feb. 8. against the Russians, and on the 8th of February had sustained a real and decided check at Eylau. The two armies had closed in a desperate and ungovernable struggle during a blinding snowstorm. Both had fought with unyielding stubbornness and had suffered terrible losses, and, when night fell, neither had gained any real advantage. Actions of this description lead invariably to the retreat of both parties. The Russians retired on the night of the battle, and so enabled Napoleon to claim a

Feb. 17. nominal victory ; but the Emperor fell back nine days later, with his army reduced to a helpless condition through straggling and marauding, and with his great reputation much shaken. His position was most dangerous, for the movement of a hundred thousand Austrians

¹ Fox to S.S., 17th March (with Villette's report), 4th May, 1st July 1807.

² 2/27th.

upon his rear would have meant ruin ; and so keenly did 1807.
he feel the peril that, on the 13th, he offered Prussia peace Feb. 13.
on terms which would have been welcomed two months
earlier. But harsh treatment had driven the people of
Prussia to madness ; and Frederick William, heartened
by their spirit and by Alexander's encouragement,
resolved to fight to the end. Austria went no further
than to offer friendly intervention ; but it was believed April 7.
at Palermo that, if this were rejected, she would seize
the moment to crush her enemy. In truth the situation
was such that Russia could with justice call upon all who
were joined with her in war against France to make a
great effort ; and the Council at Palermo, worthless and
self-seeking as it was, would hardly have been human
if it had not taken advantage of the occasion.

At the end of April the Sicilian Government resolved
without more ado to send to Naples all the troops
which could be assembled ; and M. Tatistscheff, the
Russian Minister at Palermo, on the 1st of May sent an May 1.
urgent note to Drummond, charging him to persuade
Fox to second this movement with the British troops, as
a diversion in favour of the Russian armies in Dalmatia
and European Turkey. Drummond at once answered
that he quite agreed as to the expediency of a descent
upon Naples, but that he had no control over the British
troops ; having done which, he forwarded the corre-
spondence to the General. Fox was, not unnaturally,
extremely angry that Drummond should have taken
upon himself to approve a military operation without
consulting him. The General's distrust of the Court
of Palermo was rightly undiminished. He knew that
the so-called Sicilian army was worth little, and that its
officers were the minions of the Queen. He had just
sent away over eighteen hundred men to reinforce
Fraser, after the first disaster at Rosetta. Lastly, he
was painfully conscious that the Sicilians themselves,
having gained little profit from the British occupation,
had begun to construe it simply as an abetment of the
bad government which oppressed them, and to abate

1807. much of their old hostility towards the French. His force, now reduced to fewer than nine thousand men, he considered in the circumstances to be none too strong for defence of the island ; and he therefore firmly declined to embark a single man for Naples.

The Court of Palermo none the less persisted in its mad project. The troops, such as they were, were sent to Reggio, and the Prince of Hesse-Philipstadt received orders to advance with them northward. The French detachments retired before him, in order to lure

May 29. him to a distance from the coast ; and on the 29th Tatistscheff, never doubting but that Calabria was already reoccupied, wrote in a most imperious tone to insist, in the name of his master, that the British forces should at once support the Prince's operations by sea and land. He might have spared his importunity.

May 28. On the 28th the French fell upon the Neapolitans at Mileto, routed them utterly and captured all their guns. Three out of the four Neapolitan regiments present behaved infamously ; the insurgent Massi as usual kept aloof from the fight ; and one regiment only stood up against the French pursuit and retired in fair order to Reggio.¹

The result of this foolish raid was exactly that which had been foreseen by the British commander ; but none the less it was open alike to the Court of Palermo and to Tatistscheff to argue that the presence of a British corps might have averted a defeat. Moreover, it was impossible for Fox to answer them in the terms which he used to the Secretary of State at Whitehall, namely that he could not trust the Sicilian troops, that he could only spare four thousand British from the garrison of Sicily, and that so small number was useless for any effective operations. Most unfortunately also Castlereagh had, after long delay, at last made up his mind as to his military policy in the Mediterranean, but had founded his orders upon false assumptions. On the 21st of May he wrote to Fox

¹ Fox to S.S. 18th May 1807 ; Bunbury, pp. 311-312.

that it was of the utmost importance to strike a blow 1807. at the French in Italy, but that it was necessary also that the Sicilian garrisons should be held by British troops; and that therefore any expeditionary army should be composed chiefly of Neapolitans, the British being treated merely as a "co-operating force." Castlereagh reckoned that twenty thousand men of both nations could be spared for an offensive movement; and upon this calculation he advocated an effort to recover the kingdom of Naples. It is strange that so able a man should so far have mistaken the actual situation of affairs. He could not know that Fox had been obliged to send eight thousand men to Egypt instead of five, nor that the Sicilian Government was about to court certain defeat; but he might have been aware that the Neapolitan troops were few in number and utterly worthless, and that the British General had no control over them whatever. This despatch reached Fox at the end of June. On the 1st of July, July 1. as in duty bound, he communicated its purport to Drummond, but was careful to point out that the orders had been issued under misconception of the true position. He added further that, besides reserving to himself the decision as to the time, manner, and expediency of any operations, he would undertake nothing in concert with the Sicilian troops unless they were placed under his command.¹

The truth was that, as has been said already, the real point of attack for the British should have been Northern Italy; but the time for such attack was long past, and the troops that should have composed the force had been squandered in useless and unprofitable enterprises in South America and Egypt. As had been the case in almost every year since 1793, whenever a really favourable opportunity occurred for striking a heavy blow against France, there had been no British troops at hand to take advantage of it. Russia, therefore, had just ground for complaint against the British

¹ S.S. to Fox, 21st May; Fox to S.S. 2nd July 1807.

1807. Ministers that, at the moment of her most pressing need, when she was standing up practically alone against the common enemy, and with such vigour as to make him quail before her, they had devoted the best part of their force to objects of purely British interest, wholly neglecting the general cause of Europe. Fox was presently delivered from the awkward and humiliating part which so far had been forced upon

July 10. him by Downing Street, for on the 10th of July he received orders to resign his command. In truth Fox had been little more than a figure-head from the first; and the appointment of Moore to be Commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean merely entrusted to him officially the powers which he had long exercised in fact. But the situation in Europe in July 1807 had become such as to destroy all the fair hopes encouraged by the victory of Maida in July 1806. Had Moore held the command in the Mediterranean thirteen months earlier, the course of history would have been changed, and he would have found in Italy the reputation which later he so hardly gained in Spain. Enough has been seen of the military policy of the Ministry of all the Talents; it is now time to look, though without a tear, upon its death-bed, and to consider the inheritance which it bequeathed to its successors.

AUTHORITIES.—The official despatches in the Record Office, *W.O. Orig. Corres. Mediterranean*; *Admiralty, Mediterranean, 1806-1807*; *W.O. Egypt, 1802-1807*; Maurice's *Diary of Sir John Moore*. The narration in Bunbury's *Great War with France* is founded almost entirely upon the first and third of these, supplemented by personal reminiscences and by most valuable portraiture of the individuals principally concerned.

CHAPTER XV

IN October 1806, it will be remembered, there came ^{1807.} into force the system of enlistment for short service which Windham had introduced as, in his judgment, the best and only method for replenishing and maintaining the strength of the Army. On the 15th of January 1807 the first quarterly return of recruits raised under the new conditions seemed to promise all that Windham had predicted; the number of men being nearly double of that obtained in the corresponding quarter of the preceding years. But a month later the Commander-in-chief showed, in a masterly memorandum, that ordinary recruiting was wholly insufficient to produce a force adequate to the needs of the country. The Regular Army was unequal to the many demands upon it; and the Militia, on which in consequence the country chiefly depended for internal defence, was also too weak for its purpose. He advocated therefore the organisation of the infantry of the Line into one hundred and one regiments, each of two battalions, and each attached to one of the counties of the United Kingdom.¹ The first battalions, under his scheme, were to be in every case one thousand strong, and composed of men enlisted for long service in any part of the world; the second battalions were to be raised by ballot for seven years, and for service at home only, but with liberty to enlist for general service in the first battalions. The Militia at the same time was to

¹ The Sixtieth, being a foreign regiment, as also the Guards, Cavalry and Artillery, were excluded from the proposal.

1807. be raised from eighty-four thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand men, and made strictly local ; regiments being freed from liability to serve outside their counties except in case of invasion or internal commotion. There would then be no occasion for the Volunteers ; and the money saved by their abolition would almost suffice to meet the additional expense of the new scheme.

Such a proposal was not likely to be welcome to Windham, for he had pinned his faith absolutely to short service for the supply of the Regulars, and to his National Training Act to make good all other descriptions of troops ; though the Training Act had already shown so many symptoms of being impracticable, that he had made no attempt to enforce it. Before, however, he could come to any decision he had ceased to

Mar. 18. be Minister for War. On the 18th of March, upon a difference with the King concerning the emancipation of the Catholics, Lord Grenville resigned office ; and after an interval of a week, the Duke of Portland became Prime Minister, with Spencer Perceval at the Exchequer, Lord Hawkesbury at the Home Office, Canning at the Foreign Office, Lord Mulgrave at the Admiralty, and

Mar. 25. Castlereagh at the War Office. So far as military operations were concerned, the Ministry of all the Talents might well have been termed the Ministry of all the Blunders ; but Windham had done good and solid work towards basing the military forces at large upon a surer foundation. For though his two favourite expedients were not in themselves sufficiently strong and stable to resist the tremendous pressure of the war, yet one of them furnished a substructure upon which his successor could build with solidity. As to the rest, his wild project for the invasion of South America upon both coasts remains a warning for ever that a man of exceptional ability, with the rare combination of great mathematical as well as classical learning, may be a mere child in his conception of the operations of war.

Castlereagh, immediately upon entering on his new office, wisely took stock of the situation. It proved to

be anything but satisfactory. The numbers of all ^{1807.} ranks of the Regular Army serving abroad were, roundly speaking, one hundred and five thousand men ; the numbers serving at home were one hundred thousand, and the Militia counted eighty-six thousand, exclusive, in every case, of Artillery. Of the force at home forty thousand, Artillery included, were fit for active service ; which left, roughly, one hundred and forty thousand Regulars and Militia for internal defence. But the Volunteers had declined rapidly, as Windham had intended, under his new regulations ; and so far no new force had come into being to take their place. The Training Act, which was to have educated the entire nation to arms, was, as Castlereagh rightly judged, impossible of execution, so that practically the United Kingdom was more defenceless than ever ; and this signified that the Regular forces could not without danger be sent abroad to take the offensive. There were, as above stated, forty thousand of these fit for work in the field ; but the services of a considerable proportion of them had been anticipated, so to speak, by the operations already undertaken. From two to three thousand men were necessarily held in reserve for India, where the last embers of the Mahratta war were hardly yet cold, and from five to six thousand for South America. Hereby, at a stroke, the forty thousand were reduced to thirty-one thousand ; and of these, looking to the weakness of the auxiliary forces in the United Kingdom, Castlereagh judged that it would be imprudent to hazard more than eleven thousand for diversions on the Continent. This number, as we have seen, would amply have sufficed to turn the scale in the Mediterranean ; but there was some excuse for the failure of a Minister to realise that fact within a few weeks of taking office, especially since there were calls for a British force from more than one quarter of Europe. However, Castlereagh, recognising that immediate readiness for action would increase tenfold the efficiency of the few thousand men

1807. at his disposal for service abroad, prepared to bespeak transports for them without delay.

Turning then to the main problem of augmenting the fighting strength of the Kingdom, he decided that the Volunteers must be revived and encouraged for a time, until the "fleeting and inapplicable mass," as he contemptuously termed them, could be replaced by a Local Militia, according to the recommendation of the Commander-in-chief. This done, he turned to the more difficult task of providing for an increase of the Regular Army. He had already thought out a few tentative measures, when there fell upon him as Minister for War such a succession of staggering blows as might have overwhelmed any man of less coolness and courage.

The first of these came, as a bolt from the blue, from India. At the beginning of 1805, Sir John Cradock, an officer whom we have seen already in Egypt and shall see again in Portugal, took over the chief command in the Presidency of Madras, and looking into the business of his office, discovered that there existed no written code of military regulations. He therefore directed one of his staff to draw up such a code and to set a distinguishing mark against anything that was new therein, so that the Governor, Lord William Bentinck, might see at a glance the clauses which called for his special attention. By some strange oversight, however, a novel and most dangerous rule was inserted without the slightest distinction in the body of the code, and, being unobserved by the Governor, was by him approved. Its object was to assimilate the appearance of Sepoys on parade to that of European soldiers, which, if it could have been so far accomplished as to deceive an enemy in the field, might perhaps have been worth attaining. But the rule had in fact its true origin in idle love of display. The Sepoys were required to appear on parade with their chins shaved, with their moustaches cut to a particular pattern, with their turbans folded after a special model, without their

earrings, and worst of all without the marks on the face which proclaimed their caste.¹ "Nothing," reported the Special Commission, which later inquired into the matter, "would appear to be more trivial to the public interests than the length of the hair on the upper lip of a Sepoy ; yet to the individual himself the shape and fashion of the whisker is a badge of his caste and an article of his religion." It was with such delicate matters that a forgotten staff-officer presumed in the innocence of his heart to interfere, seeking to force upon India the pedantry of King Frederick the Great.

In April 1806 patterns of the new turban were sent to different native regiments, and by some curious freak of the native intellect were considered to resemble the hats worn by half-castes and by native Christians. Reading the orders as to shaving and caste-marks under the shadow thrown by the obnoxious head-dress, the men thought that they detected in them a cunning design for their forcible conversion to Christianity. Accordingly in May the grenadiers of a battalion of Sepoys which was quartered at Vellore refused to fold their turbans after the prescribed model, informing their Colonel very respectfully that they could not wear it in that form without lowering themselves for ever in the eyes of their countrymen. Such a protest from the smartest company of a battalion might have seemed to merit particular attention. The Commander-in-chief could see nothing in it but a bad case of insubordination ; and by his order twenty-one of the grenadiers were sent to Madras for trial. Two respectable natives, a Mahomedan and a Hindoo, testified that there was nothing objectionable in the new turban upon any score, secular or religious. The whole of the accused were convicted and sentenced to be flogged, though the penalty was remitted in the case of all but

¹ The order as to the turbans was dated 14th Nov. 1805 ; that respecting the effacement of caste-marks was issued early in 1806. Wilson, *Madras Army*, iii. 167, 169.

1806. two, upon their profession of repentance. By this mistaken severity the suspicions of the Sepoys as to their forcible conversion to Christianity were strengthened ; and there were not wanting men to take advantage of their discontent.

The erring battalion was removed from Vellore and replaced by another ; but immediately afterwards the Government at Madras learned that the new turban had drawn upon itself the like antagonism in other quarters. The authorities now woke to the fact that this was no common movement ; but still they did not repeal the offending regulations. Sir John Cradock, for his part, showed willingness and almost anxiety that the whole question should be reconsidered ; but the Government refused to support him, alleging that, since the order had been originally issued by the sole authority of the Commander-in-chief, it could not be cancelled without injury to discipline. Now it so happened that Vellore had been selected as the residence for Tippoo Sahib's family after the capture of Seringapatam. His sons, though their dethronement was softened by the grant of lavish allowances from the East India Company, never forgot that their fore-fathers had been for two generations the sovereigns of Mysore ; and their comparative wealth made them the resort of a swarm of hungry dependents. To these vagabonds the opportunity for mischief was welcome. Meetings were held at Vellore, in which they did their utmost to irritate the discontent of the Sepoys ; and one of Tippoo's sons not only sent them encouraging messages from the palace, but upon at least one occasion attended one of their assemblies in person. The evil spread rapidly. Correspondence was opened with aggrieved Sepoys in other garrisons ; and a general movement was planned for a counter-attack upon the hated Christians who were threatening their religion. The preparations were made with such stealth that no British officer harboured the slightest suspicion of the trouble which was brewing among the

native troops. In the middle of June a private in a native battalion did indeed inform his Colonel of the designs of the intending mutineers ; but the native officers, being accomplices in the general conspiracy, discredited the man's intelligence and advised the Colonel to place him in durance as insane. The incident therefore passed unnoticed, and the British officers remained undisturbed in their fancied security.

At the beginning of July the garrison of Vellore consisted of the Sixty-ninth Foot, numbering rather fewer than four hundred of all ranks, and a battalion and a half of Sepoys, amounting to rather over eighteen hundred officers and men, the whole being under command of Colonel Fancourt of the Thirty-fourth Foot. Many of the Sepoys lived in the town, but kept their arms in the fort ; and hence, when parade was to be held in the early morning, it was customary for them to sleep in the fort on the previous night, in order that they might turn out without delay. Such a parade had been ordered for one of the Sepoy battalions before dawn of the 10th of July ; and, since by chance the sentries were supplied on that day by the other native battalion, the malcontents judged the opportunity too favourable to be missed. At three o'clock in the morning the Sepoys made a general attack upon all the Europeans in the fort. The guards and sentries were overpowered ; the quarters both of officers and men were surrounded, and the mutineers, not content with pouring in volleys of musketry, brought up two guns from the magazine to play upon the barracks of the Sixty-ninth. Surprised in their sleep and with no officers to direct them, the men made little resistance beyond holding the ingress to their barracks. Colonel Fancourt and several other officers were shot down at once ; and success appeared to the insurgents to be so certain that they proclaimed one of Tippoo's sons to be Sultan and hoisted over the fort the flag of Mysore.

However, in the darkness a few officers of the

1806. Sixty-ninth with a sergeant, Brady by name, contrived July 10. to meet, and, sallying forth, forced their way into the barracks. Quickly rallying their men, they broke out from the windows on to the ramparts under a heavy fire, and, driving the mutineers before them, gained the magazine. Here, however, they found that all ball-cartridges had already been removed by their enemies, and were fain to retire to the main gate, though not before two brave men, Sergeant M'Manus and Private Bottom, had, in contempt of a very dangerous fire, pulled down the rebel flag. But the little party fell fast, being under a continuous shower of musketry; and very soon two surgeons were the only officers left unwounded. Another small detachment of three officers and thirty men in the meanwhile found a rope, which had been hung by a mutineer over the walls for the admission of his comrades, descended by it and took refuge in a small external redoubt. This was found to be already occupied by Colonel Forbes, commander of one of the native battalions, and by a few Sepoys who remained loyal to him. Moreover, yet other officers, who lived outside the walls, had guessed from the firing what was going forward, and had despatched a messenger at full gallop to Arcot to summon the Nineteenth Light Dragoons from thence to their assistance.

It chanced that Colonel Gillespie, who commanded the Nineteenth, was just starting for a ride with one of his captains when he met the messenger from Vellore. Gillespie was a man who had long before gained a name for reckless daring. In Ireland he had fought a duel across a handkerchief and had killed his man; in St. Domingo, where he had served with the Jamaica Light Dragoons, he had distinguished himself greatly in action, and still more by killing single-handed with his sword six out of eight assailants who had attacked his house by night. In a journey to India overland he had fought another duel with a French officer at Constantinople, and had braved many perilous adventures. In fact he was a man who, as his death at the last will show in

due time, never learned the meaning of fear. Finding 1806. from the messenger that the gate of Vellore was shut July 10. and that there was firing within, he at once hastened to the lines of the cavalry, and in a few minutes was galloping along the road to the fortress with one squadron of the Nineteenth and a troop of native cavalry ; leaving the rest of both regiments, together with their guns, to follow him as soon as possible.

As he approached the walls of Vellore the little party of the Sixty-ninth, which still resisted over the gateway, was almost at the last gasp. They had not a cartridge left ; and the Sepoys were collecting to make an end of them, when Brady, who had served in Jamaica with the Sixty-ninth, recognised Gillespie and cried out that God Almighty had sent him from the West to the East Indies to save their lives. Most of the mutineers retired when they caught sight of the little party of dragoons, and Gillespie galloped up to the gateway unmolested. Four successive gates were to be passed before the fortress could be entered. The two outermost were fortunately open, but the third was closed. Gillespie's arrival, however, put new life into the Sixty-ninth, some of whom lowered themselves down from the walls by their belts and opened the gate from within, though not without the loss of several of their number killed or wounded. There remained the fourth and strongest gate, which all their efforts were powerless to open. Never at a loss, Gillespie broke in the wicket, and with Captain Wilson and three dismounted men of the Nineteenth entered the fort under the fire of the mutineers assembled within the yard. For some minutes Gillespie strove desperately to force the locks and bars of the gate from the inside, but failing in every attempt, withdrew, seeing that long delay could mean only a purposeless death. On returning, however, he spied a rope on the ground, and, throwing one end of it up to the Sixty-ninth above the gateway, swarmed up it and joined them. Then seizing a regimental colour, which

1806. was fixed in the wall, he rallied the disheartened men to July 10. him, and, leading them straight upon a battery of three guns, drove away the gunners with the bayonet, and turned the cannon upon the mutineers. These last instantly shrank back, and so afforded a short but valuable delay before they again assembled, on realising that the guns were harmless for want of ammunition.

The fate of Vellore still hung in the balance when the remainder of the Nineteenth Light Dragoons, with their light cannon, appeared at the gate. Hastening back to the gateway, Gillespie ordered the newcomers to burst the gate open, which was done by a single shot. The enemy, however, had made their dispositions to resist his entrance, and had brought two guns to bear upon the narrow ingress from the gate ; so that it was necessary to clear the way before the Nineteenth could file in to attack. Gillespie therefore appealed to the Sixty-ninth for a final effort, and, leading them on, swept the enemy from their guns with the bayonet. Not a few of his men fell in the charge, but the work was done ; and the terrible old soldiers of the Nineteenth dashed in with the sabre and cut down every Sepoy that they could see. Between three and four hundred of the mutineers fell inside the fort ; many others fled by a sally-port, only to be caught and slain by the squadrons which were waiting outside. One small party held out in the barracks, firing at every man who came near them ; but some of the dragoons, dismounting, stormed the building and killed every one of them. By ten o'clock in the morning the struggle was over and all was again quiet ; but of the garrison fifteen officers and one hundred and fifteen men were dead, five officers and seventy-six men wounded. Had Gillespie delayed but five minutes before scaling the wall and rallying the soldiers that lingered on it, not a soul of the garrison would have escaped.

Seldom, if ever, has a greater catastrophe been averted by the daring and resource of a single resolute man. Subsequent enquiry proved that the Sepoys in

several other stations were likewise prepared to mutiny, 1806. and would have done so but for the failure at the headquarters of the disaffected, Vellore. The mutineers were in fact misled by the temptation of an exceptionally favourable opportunity into premature insurrection; and, but for this accident and for the presence of Gillespie, there is no saying where the consequences might have ended. Among them might well have been the loss of British India, and quite possibly the ruin of Britain. The full extent of the peril was not apprehended until it was past, though the Madras Government was sufficiently alarmed to apply even to Ceylon for reinforcements, which General Maitland, having put an end to the Kandian war, was able to furnish, and did furnish most liberally.¹ The trouble over, the authorities proceeded swiftly with rewards and punishments. Gillespie was presented by the East India Company with a grant of £2500; Sergeant Brady also received a handsome sum besides being recommended for a commission; and every non-commissioned officer and man of the Nineteenth who had been employed at Vellore obtained a gratuity of one month's pay. Sir John Cradock and Lord William Bentinck, on the other hand, were peremptorily recalled.²

The news of this mutiny reached England in May, 1807. and was the first shock to come to Castlereagh, who, having had experience of East Indian administration at home, could realise its true significance. He resolved at once to despatch to India four thousand men, being twice the number which he had held in reserve to meet unforeseen events in that quarter. Almost at the same time came the tidings of Duckworth's reverse before Constantinople, which was the more serious, inasmuch as it signified the failure of the Navy to afford the assistance which Russia claimed from a British army. Since the battle of Eylau the King of Prussia and the Tsar had drawn together more closely than ever, and

¹ *Col. Corres. Ceylon*, Maitland to S.S. 20th Sept. 1806.

² Wilson's *Madras Army*; *Life of Sir Rollo Gillespie*.

1807. both potentates had importuned Lord Hutchinson, the British Commissioner at headquarters, as well for money as for the despatch of British troops to the Baltic. Dumouriez, always busy, drew up a plan of campaign ; and various points were suggested by him and by others for the disembarkation of the force. For the right understanding of these it is necessary to glance at the position of the French and Russian armies.

After the unsuccessful fight of Eylau, Napoleon fell back to winter quarters ; spreading out the four corps of Bernadotte, Soult, Ney, and Davoust along the line of the Passarge to the source of the Ukra, from Braunsberg on the Frische Haff on the north, through Wormditt and Guttstadt to Gilgenburg on the south. The cantonments thus took the form of the arc of a circle, convex towards the front or east, with both flanks thrown back. The general reserve was assembled at Osterode, in rear, that is to say to westward, of Allenstein ; and the principal dépôt of supplies was at Thorn on the Vistula. The Russians and Prussians moved forward to confront them on the opposite bank of the Passarge ; their cantonments extending from over against Braunsberg south-eastward to Heilsberg on the Alle. In rear of the French lines Lefebvre blockaded the fortresses of Graudenz on the Vistula and Colberg on the shore of the Baltic, while his main efforts were directed to the siege of Dantzig. This last-named city was completely invested, and the first parallel before it was opened by the 1st of April ; but the strength of the place was such that it could be counted upon to hold out for the best part of two months.

Over and above these positions and operations of the main armies, another corps under Marshal Mortier was engaged in the reduction of Swedish Pomerania, and above all of Stralsund. Now the integrity of Stralsund, as an inlet for British commerce and as a place of debarkation for a British expedition into the Continent, was of the first importance to England.

British relations with Sweden since the return of 1806. Cathcart's expedition from the Weser in February 1806 had been very unsatisfactory. The mad king Gustavus had wasted most of his energy during 1806 in a bitter, though not unprovoked, quarrel with Prussia. Russia and England strove earnestly to bring about a reconciliation ; but, even when the certainty of war with France prompted Frederick William to bury all animosity and to seek allies wherever he could find them, Gustavus received his overtures with immovable indifference. He even went the length of leaving Stralsund himself, and withdrawing his troops from it in September, just at the moment when the opportunity was coming for the force to act with some effect. And meanwhile the attitude of the Swedish nation was growing dangerous. The King would pay attention to none but foreign affairs, entirely neglecting all internal administration. From sentiment rather than policy, he had from the first been bitterly hostile to France ; but, albeit at war, he had never made the slightest effort to prepare or to improve his military strength ; and the people, contrasting their own sufferings with the prosperous neutrality of Denmark, had begun to murmur the word revolution. Even Pierrepont, in September 1806, put it to the British Government whether the assistance derived from the Swedish army were worth the subsidy. A little later, however, the collapse of Prussia after Jena threw Swedish Pomerania open to the French armies, and the disgraceful surrender of Stettin furnished them with the heavy artillery necessary for the siege of Stralsund. The whole situation was then altered, and Pierrepont in November returned to the Sisyphean task of urging Gustavus to action.¹

The position of the British Ministers was extremely embarrassing. The King of Sweden had been so loyal to the alliance on many trying occasions that it was

¹ Pierrepont to Sec. of State, 7th June, 24th July, 14th Sept., 10th Nov.; Sec. of State to Pierrepont, 11th Aug., 10th Oct. 1806.

1806. difficult to abandon him ; but it was also true that England had received no value for the subsidies granted so far. Moreover, it was only reasonable to expect that, when Sweden's independence was threatened, she should make some effort of her own to preserve it, apart from the loyal support of which she was assured from England ; and it was almost impossible to send a British force to act with the Swedes, because the mad monarch would insist upon taking command of them himself. The only course, therefore, was to stimulate Gustavus to increase his forces, promising Britain's help if the independence of Sweden should be at stake, but warning him that, unless his army undertook active operations, the subsidy would be discontinued, and discouraging any idea of joint action between British and Swedish troops.¹

To do poor Gustavus justice, he was at first fully awake to the danger of the situation and to the need for cordial co-operation between the two countries. Napoleon in his anxiety to secure his flanks and rear, offered the Swedish King an increase of territory if he would make peace, but gave him to understand that, if he refused, Stralsund should be attacked and taken, and very likely handed over finally to Prussia. This last hint was infinitely cunning, for Gustavus still harboured the strongest personal resentment against Frederick William ; but, even with danger and probable ruin staring him in the face, the unfortunate man hesitated not for a moment to reject the overture. Indeed he went so far as to disgrace the luckless official who had ventured to transmit it to him. This was well and nobly done ; and, in the presence of such courageous and honourable action, Pierrepont was fain to disobey his instructions as to stopping the payment of British money to Sweden. But unfortunately the King's passive defiance could be of little profit to the common cause. The moment that Pierrepont urged an increase of the Swedish army, Gustavus hinted at an increase of subsidy ; and the

¹ Sec. of State to Pierrepont, 10th, 28th Oct., 11th Nov. 1806.

British Government was firm in its resolution to grant ^{1806.} no more allowances for Swedish troops unless there were occasion for them to act outside their own territories. Sweden (such was their argument) was now fighting for herself and not for others, and should need no reward to tempt her to defend her own borders.¹

At the beginning of December 1806, seven thousand French had arrived on the frontier of Pomerania, and a considerable corps under Marshal Mortier was advancing through Mecklenburg eastward, evidently destined to act either against Stralsund or in Poland. There could be no doubt but that Sweden must arm at once or perish ; yet the King declared that he could do nothing unless England agreed to subsidise fifteen thousand additional troops for him, even hinting that, if this demand were refused, he would declare his neutrality at once. This was merely an outburst of petulance ; but the idea of an increased subsidy had taken firm hold of Gustavus, and the British Government was equally resolute in the determination not to concede it. Early in January 1807 the Swedish Minister in London broached ^{1807.} the project of a diversion by a Swedish army in Pomerania. The British Cabinet cordially approved, but intimated that no money could be granted until the plan of campaign and the number of troops to be employed had been laid before them, and until the Swedish army had actually moved beyond its own frontier. Three more weeks were passed in haggling ; and on the 28th of January Mortier entered Pomerania ^{Jan. 28.} with about ten thousand men, and drove the outlying Swedish troops slowly before him into Stralsund. By the 30th he had completed the blockade of the place on ^{Jan. 30.} the side of the land ; but the communications by sea remained open, and the French guns were powerless to silence those of the Swedish gunboats between the fortress and the Island of Rügen. This active aggression roused the spirit of the King somewhat,

¹ Pierrepont to Sec. of State, 18th, 27th Nov.; Sec. of State to Pierrepont, 2nd, 9th Dec. 1806.

1807. and a few days later, in a moment of expansion, he declared to Pierrepont, who came to take leave of him before departing for England, that he was resolved to drive the French from Pomerania, and that he would be content with a diminished subsidy, if Great Britain would send a body of troops to assist his operations.¹

For the moment the King was as good as his word. Twelve hundred Swedish troops were embarked for Feb. Stralsund in the third week in February; and Mr. Stratton, Pierrepont's successor, was officially informed that five thousand more would reach the place in the middle of March, in consideration of which the King trusted that the British subsidy would be increased. Simultaneously the Swedish Minister in London renewed his importunity for more money. The British Ministers grew impatient. They had repeatedly pledged themselves to pay for any Swedish force that would take the field outside Swedish territory in North Germany, but they declined to bribe the King to defend his own possessions. They therefore reiterated their former questions as to the strength of any Swedish corps that might be at their disposal for a diversion; and offered definitely, if the King should set twenty-five thousand men on foot, to send a brigade of dragoons to act with them. Stratton duly laid this proposition before Gustavus, who answered that he could send no more troops to Pomerania than those already there, which he reckoned at sixteen thousand, and that the rate of subsidy offered by England was too low. He added, however, that he would be glad to receive the brigade of British dragoons at once, and would ask the King of Prussia, of all people, to send ten thousand men to Pomerania. Considering that the very few Prussian troops, which still remained in the field, were watching Napoleon's cantonments in speedy expectation of the advance of the French army, the request was rightly

¹ Pierrepont to Sec. of State, 12th Dec. 1806, 6th, 14th Feb. 1807; Sec. of State to Pierrepont, 26th Dec. 1806, 13th Jan. 1807.

treated as that of a madman, and refused. A few days ^{1807.} later the secret of Gustavus's unwillingness to send more troops to Pomerania was revealed. They had been required at home to seize a sum of £80,000 which was on its way to the Tsar's headquarters as an instalment of the British subsidy to Russia, and which was now swept into the Swedish treasury upon the pretext that it was owing to Sweden by Russia under a treaty of 1791. The Tsar with admirable magnanimity ignored the whole transaction ; but the incident shows the extraordinary difficulties thrown in the way of the Allies by the demented monarch. Thus was the precious interval of Napoleon's inaction after Eylau wasted in follies and futilities ; though meanwhile the aspect of affairs had improved in Pomerania. On the 29th of March, ^{Mar. 29.} Mortier was summoned with the whole of his force, excepting one division, to Colberg ; whereupon the Swedish General Essen, sallying out from Stralsund in superior numbers, drove back the French with the loss of over one thousand prisoners, and followed them for some nine miles into Prussian territory. It was at this point that Hutchinson wrote privately from the Russian headquarters, urging the British Government to send a British force to the Baltic, and that Castlereagh took over the control of the War Office from Windham.¹

Appreciating the importance of Hutchinson's propositions, Castlereagh wisely submitted his letter to Lord Cathcart, an officer of wide experience and considerable knowledge of North Germany. Cathcart's very sensible criticism was that, since England could only spare twelve thousand men for the suggested object, and these could only be despatched in two separate embarkations, their intervention would be of little profit. If sent direct to Memel, twelve thousand men would be an unworthy contingent for England to add to the main army of one hundred thousand Russians and Prussians. If consigned to Dantzig, supposing

¹ Sec. of State to Stratton, 10th March ; Stratton to Sec. of State, 26th, 27th, 29th March, 5th, 7th April 1807.

1807. that place to be open to seaward, the force would be too small to raise the siege, and would probably only share the fate of the garrison, or at best be compelled to re-embark. If despatched to Rügen or Stralsund, they would find few Swedish troops at hand to take the field with them ; and, though at the moment the French were weak in that quarter, it was certain that they would be reinforced by Napoleon. If a British detachment were sent to the Elbe and strengthened by Russians, Swedes, Hessian peasants, and Hanoverian volunteers, it might doubtless embarrass Napoleon greatly between the Elbe and the Weser ; but so motley a force would need time for organisation, and in the interval the Emperor could make dispositions to check it. On the whole, therefore, Cathcart could only recommend that the troops, which could be spared for foreign service, should be stationed near the ports of embarkation, and that the stores and supplies for an expedition should be shipped, so as to menace vaguely all assailable points. The truth was that England was impotent for the moment, owing to the mismanagement and misapplication of her military resources.¹

Cathcart's prediction respecting the French around Stralsund was very shortly verified. In the second week of April Mortier returned with part of his force to Stettin, and, advancing against Essen, drove back

April 17. the Swedes in their turn to the north of the Peene ;
 April 18. with the result that on the 18th the two generals agreed to an armistice, subject to the ratification of the King of Sweden. It was impossible to divine what might be the decision of that eccentric person ; but one of his ministers gave Stratton to understand that, if England would send the King's German Legion to Stralsund, His Majesty would put an end to the truce forthwith. Before, however, this hint could reach Castlereagh, the latter had made up his mind to send a British officer to concert a plan of operations for a joint force of

¹ *W.O. Orig. Corres.* 188, Cathcart to Sec. of State, 23rd April 1807.

Swedes and British ; and had expressed his earnest hope that the return of that officer might be the signal for the opening of the campaign. A few days earlier King Frederick William signed a convention with Gustavus, engaging to send five thousand Prussian troops under Blücher to act with the Swedes in Pomerania. All therefore seemed at last to be in good train for effective resistance. The Prussians began to arrive at Rügen early in May. Gustavus himself repaired to Stralsund ; and in the second week of that month General Clinton came thither from England to make the final arrangements.¹

But finality was a term not to be found in the vocabulary of Gustavus. He duly received Clinton in audience, but, far from discussing the matter in hand, he merely repeated his old reproaches against England for her niggardliness in the matter of money, and declared that not even subsidies would induce him to put into the field more than sixteen thousand men. This fit of temper was probably due to Stratton's refusal, under Canning's instructions, to grant one penny for any but Swedish troops ; whereas the King had hoped to saddle England with the expense of his five thousand Prussians. Not the least embarrassing feature in the whole situation was that the armistice between the French and Swedes had been not only observed but prolonged, and that, when Gustavus refused to ratify the prolongation, the French commander announced his intention nevertheless to continue it. This was in itself a suspicious circumstance, for it was known that among the King's advisers there were many who wished that he should throw himself into the arms of France ; and loyal though he had been so far to England, there was no predicting what his next movement might be. After more haggling over the subsidy, Canning at the end of May replaced Stratton once more by Pierrepont, in the hope that he might bring matters to a conclusion.

¹ Stratton to Sec. of State, 26th April, 1st, 7th May ; Sec. of State to Stratton, 28th April 1807.

1807. Pierrepont's instructions bade him announce that eight or ten thousand British troops would be immediately embarked for Stralsund, and empowered him to make concessions on the financial side which were almost unwarrantably liberal. Thus at last a convention was

June 23. signed on the 23rd of June, whereby Great Britain agreed to pay for sixteen thousand Swedish soldiers, but reserved to herself the right to withdraw her own troops from Pomerania if she should think fit to employ them elsewhere. Since the Swedish Government gave the effective strength of its army at fifty-three thousand men, it cannot be said that England's behaviour was otherwise than generous.¹

So this troublesome business was brought more or less to an end ; but in the meanwhile Napoleon had not been idle. He had evidently obtained copies either of Hutchinson's letter or of Cathcart's to Castlereagh, or possibly of both ; for on the 29th of April he organised a corps of observation of about thirty thousand troops, chiefly Dutch and Spanish, under Marshal Brune, and gave exact instructions as to the method of meeting a British descent in every one of the quarters mentioned by Cathcart.² Moreover, Dantzig

May 26. had fallen on the 26th of May, leaving the Emperor free to take the offensive with his main army as soon as he would. It was, however, the Allies who actually assumed the initiative by a movement against Ney's

June 4. advanced corps on the 4th of June. The attack was a failure ; and Napoleon, taking the offensive in his turn, suffered a check on the 10th of June at Heilsberg, but

June 14. on the 14th gained a decisive victory at Friedland. This battle for the time rendered the Russian army incapable of further action. On the 21st of June an armistice

June 25. was signed, and on the 25th Napoleon and Alexander held their celebrated interview on the raft at Tilsit.

¹ Stratton to Sec. of State, 16th, 20th, 25th May, 2nd June ; Sec. of State to Pierrepont, 30th May (3) ; 2nd, 11th, 16th June ; Pierrepont to Sec. of State, 19th, 24th June 1807.

² *Corres. de Napoleon*, 12,494.

A fortnight later, on the 7th and 9th of July, were signed the treaties that ended for the present the war between France and the Allied forces of Prussia and Russia, and so broke up the coalition. Prussia, pursuant to Napoleon's policy ever since Jena, he crushed to the earth, reducing her territory to Brandenburg, Prussian Pomerania, East Prussia, and Silesia ; while Prussian Poland, which stands as a wedge between these two last, was converted into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and handed to Napoleon's obedient ally, the King of Saxony. Russia, for her part, agreed by open articles to cede Cattaro and the Ionian Isles to France, and to recognise Napoleon's vassal-kingdoms and the Confederation of the Rhine ; by secret articles, to close her ports to British commerce, and to declare war against England unless she accepted the Tsar's mediation to end her quarrel with France. In the event of such declaration of war, Denmark, Sweden, and Portugal were likewise to be summoned by France and Russia to close their ports to England or declare war upon her. Lastly, Napoleon promised to mediate between Russia and Turkey and, if his good offices should fail, to ally himself with the Tsar against the Sultan for the partition of the Ottoman Empire.

Quite unconscious of the coming storm—the third great blow that was to fall upon him—Castlereagh, when the campaign opened in Poland, was still busy with his instructions to Lord Cathcart, who had been appointed Commander-in-chief of the expedition to the Baltic, and of all other troops that could be spared for foreign service. The number of these was thirty thousand rank and file, or about thirty-four thousand of all ranks, of which the King's German Legion furnished very nearly one-half. The British contingent, therefore, little exceeded Castlereagh's estimate, formed in May, that no more than twelve thousand British rank and file could safely be withdrawn from the British Isles. Moreover, Cathcart was informed that though the whole force would "in due time" be united under his

1807. orders, he was for the present to proceed to Stralsund with the King's German Legion only, and there to co-operate with the Swedish and Prussian troops upon the spot. While his corps was acting with the Swedish Army, he was to consider himself under the command of the King of Sweden, though a formal request would be preferred to that monarch that the troops sent from England should not be dispersed nor employed in garrison duty. Moreover, as has been already said, King George reserved to himself the right to recall the whole or any part of his force at any time, and to employ them elsewhere. Ten thousand stand of arms were at the same time to be sent to Stralsund for the use of the Prussian Government.¹

These instructions point to irresolution on the part of Castlereagh and of his colleagues. They had sent officers to ascertain the strength of the French and the disposition of the people about the mouths of the Elbe and Weser; and they had also before them a project for seizing and occupying Texel and other small islands on the north-west of the Zuider Zee.² These circumstances, added to the vague language of Cathcart's instructions that his entire force would be united "in due time," seem to indicate that nothing very serious was intended at Stralsund. However, the King's German Legion sailed in two divisions on the 19th of June and 1st of July, and arrived at Rügen on the July 8. 8th of July.³ Owing to the shallowness of the water,

¹ Sec. of State to Cathcart, 9th, 18th, 27th June; Cathcart to Sec. of State, 26th June 1807.

² Castlereagh, *Desp.* vi. pp. 209-230.

³ 1st and 2nd L.D. 1126 r. and f.

1st and 2nd L.I. batts.

3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th
Line Batts., Garrison co.,
Dépôt company } . . . 6150

7276 r. and f.

Say 8200 of all ranks.

This return, taken from *Military Transactions*, p. 230, differs widely from that given in Castlereagh's letter of 9th July to Cathcart;

the transports were anchored two miles from the shore, 1807. which made the disembarkation of the cavalry so difficult that a full week was needed to land the entire force. On the 16th Cathcart arrived and found a July 16. gloomy state of affairs ; for the news of the armistice at Tilsit had reached the place on the 2nd of July, and such a sequel to the battle of Friedland was ominous for the future. Moreover, everything was amiss in Stralsund itself. Gustavus was there, though not expected to wait long, for the French had invested the town again in great force on the side of the land ; the defences of the fortress were backward in spite of England's subsidies, granted expressly for their improvement ; and everybody was despondent. Cathcart's principal anxiety was, in fact, to know whether Ministers did or did not expect him to risk the sacrifice of part of the German Legion by allowing it to serve with the garrison, for the speedy fall of the place seemed to be inevitable. There was another danger also. Since the armistice of Tilsit, the attitude of Denmark had changed, and the Prince Regent had said publicly that peace between France and Russia might compel him, however unwillingly, to close Danish ports to the British. If this should happen, then the retreat of the King's German Legion would be absolutely cut off.¹

Meanwhile the British Government had, through some channel which is still unknown, become aware of the secret as well of the public articles of Tilsit. With great nerve and courage Ministers decided upon immediate offensive action. The crisis was the most serious for England since the outbreak of the war in 1793. France, which to all intents comprehended half of Europe, was leagued with Russia, which compreh-

but beyond doubt it is more correct, though it gives no account of the German artillery, which, according to Castlereagh, should have numbered 1043. This number certainly was not present, but some strength of artillery undoubtedly accompanied the force.

¹ Beamish, *History of the K.G.L.* vol. i. 107 ; Cathcart to Sec. of State, 16th July ; Pierrepont to Sec. of State, 2nd, 20th July 1807.

1807. hended the other half, and they had come to an understanding to enjoy their respective shares amicably, and to subdue England by shutting out her goods from all continental markets. England had not an ally in Europe excepting Sweden, which was rather an encumbrance than a help ; and, though the French fleet was practically extinct, yet the fleets of other nations might be employed to bring Britain to reason by a shorter process than starvation. The British Ministry saw this point, and came to an instant resolution. Napoleon must not be allowed to appropriate the Danish fleet, which had lately been brought to the highest efficiency, nor to use Danish ports as a new base for invasion of

July 18. Britain. On the 18th of July, therefore, instructions were written to the naval Commander-in-chief in the Baltic to prevent any military reinforcement of the island of Zealand, using no unnecessary harshness, but firmly refusing to let troopships pass until the Danish Government should have declared its policy. On the same day a letter was sent to Cathcart to apprise him that the Government had resolved to ask Denmark for explanation of her intentions, and to back the demand by armed force. A powerful fleet would therefore be despatched to the Baltic under Admiral Gambier, and nearly nineteen thousand troops would follow as soon as they could be embarked. The troops at Stralsund were to be embarked without delay and conveyed to some rendezvous to be fixed by Gambier. The King of Sweden, it was added, would doubtless see the necessity of the case, and would recognise that this employment of the British troops would be as much to his interest as to that of Great Britain ; for the Danish fleet, if employed first against England, would certainly be turned later against Sweden. In a second letter, written twenty-four hours after the first, Castlereagh announced his hope that the entire force in England would be ready to sail within eight days.¹

¹ Sec. of State to Naval C-in-C. Baltic, 18th July ; to Adm. Gambier, 19th July ; to Cathcart, 18th, 19th July 1807.

So much for the military preparations ; in yet July 18. another province equal activity was shown. At one 1807. o'clock on the morning of the 18th of July, Mr. Francis Jackson of the diplomatic service was roused from his bed in Northamptonshire by a message from Mr. Canning, bidding him hasten to London at once, and be ready to sail from Yarmouth within twelve hours of his arrival. His mission was to proceed to Kiel, where the Crown Prince of Denmark was then residing, to demand explanations of the Danish Government, and to endeavour to come to an amicable settlement ; but, as Jackson was instructed to accept no terms which did not give England temporary possession of the Danish fleet, the prospects of a peaceful arrangement were not bright. Canning appears to have thought that the negotiations might be successful ; but Jackson, when questioned by him, declared that they could not be so, and that no one had ever ventured to suggest that they might be so.¹ In truth a demand, under pain of immediate hostilities, for the surrender of a whole fleet, though tempered by an assurance that it should be restored at once upon the signature of a general peace, was a military rather than a diplomatic proceeding ; though beyond all doubt the Ministry was most anxious to avoid doing injury to Denmark. But the law of self-preservation is cogent ; and Jackson, Cathcart, and Gambier all alike were directed to brook no delay and to refer no questions to England for decision. The matter was to be brought to an issue at once. Unless Denmark suspended all preparations for war and gave up her ships, the British fleet and army would attack her principal dockyard and arsenal at Copenhagen. Nor was this haste unwarrantable ; for Napoleon also, though ignorant of England's intentions, on the 31st of July July 31. informed the Danish Minister at Paris that, if England refused Russia's mediation for peace with France, Denmark must take her choice between war with England and war with the French Empire. And this was no vain

¹ Narrative in *Jackson Papers*, P.R.O.

1807. threat, for two days later orders were sent to Bernadotte that, in the latter case, he was to command the force destined to seize Denmark's continental territory.¹ It was undoubtedly cruel that a neutral country should have been subjected to such harsh treatment ; but the cruelty lay in the higher law which condemns human creatures to suffer for their misfortunes no less than for their faults. It was Denmark's misfortune to lie between hammer and anvil.

The measures of the British Government were pursued with the greatest activity and secrecy. There was much difficulty in procuring transports, most of the merchant shipping being already at sea for the summer voyages ; but all obstacles were overcome, not the less readily, perhaps, in view of the bad news that had recently arrived from Egypt. A strict embargo was laid upon the whole coast of Britain for four or five days before Gambier's fleet sailed, and was continued until four days later, so that no possible hint of its destination could get abroad. Napoleon at Paris knew by the 7th of August that an expedition had started for the Baltic on or about the 28th of July, even as he had already received information of the departure of the previous armament for Rügen ; but he gave no orders except for the Dutch troops to concentrate at Emden, and for the reinforcement, if necessary, of Brune before Stralsund.² Rumour in general indicated Holland as the probable point of attack ; and the true object of

July 26. the armament was nowhere suspected. On the 26th Gambier sailed for the Sound, and on the 29th the transports likewise put to sea with eighteen thousand men of all ranks,³ the whole having been embarked

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 12,962, 12,974.

² *Ibid.* 13,005.

³ *Cavalry* : 3rd L.D. ; K.G.L. 562 r. and f.

Artillery : British . . . 1514} . . . 2208

German . . . 694} . . .

84 field guns ; 101 siege guns

Infantry : British 14,030

1/Coldstream Guards ; 1/3rd Guards ;

within ten days after the orders had been issued. 1807. Castlereagh's energy, since he had first taken over the War Office, was bearing good fruit.

Meanwhile the French force before Stralsund was rapidly increasing. It was, as had already become common under the Empire, a motley host, composed of Saxons, Bavarians, Dutch, Italians, and some of Romana's Spaniards ; but there was little to oppose them in the fortress, for the besieged regarded all outside events with equal indifference. The King's German Legion had been engaged in a slight skirmish, and had lost a few men wounded ; but the Swedish military officers, weary of serving under a mad sovereign, were eager for nothing but capitulation. The King remained in the fortress, never interesting himself in its defence nor exposing himself to any risk, but effectually restraining the exertions of every one else. Cathcart was evidently chafing over the purposeless waste of King George's German troops, when on the 3rd of Aug. 3. August he received Castlereagh's orders to embark the Legion at once and proceed to the Sound. There was some reason to fear that the King of Sweden would raise objections to the withdrawal of a full half of the garrison from Stralsund ; and indeed the poor creature did at first show much ill-temper ; but presently he yielded with a good grace to Pierrepont's arguments, only stipulating that Cathcart, being under his command, should ask his formal leave to embark. This done, the unfortunate monarch a few days later quarrelled with Essen, his one efficient General, sent him to Rügen and took personal command at Stralsund himself. This sealed the fate of the fortress.

1/4th, 1/7th,* 1/8th,* 1/23rd,
1/28th, 1/32nd, 1/43rd, 1/50th,
2/52nd, 1/79th, 1/82nd, 1/92nd,
1/95th (5 cos.), 2/95th.

German: 1st and 2nd Line Batts. 1519 r. and f.

Total: 18,319 rank and file—say, 20,250 of all ranks.

* These two battalions, 1548 r. and f., did not sail until the 8th of August.

1807. The inhabitants incontinently fled in all directions, recognising that the police of the city was at an end. The officers, feeling that all capable military direction was over, became insubordinate as well as despondent;

Aug. 20. and on the 20th King Gustavus withdrew the garrison to Rügen, leaving the burghers to make the best terms that they could with Brune. Thus, as Pierrepont bitterly said, the result of all the British subsidies granted for the defence of Stralsund was that the place was surrendered without the firing of a shot.¹

Aug. 3. On the 3rd of August Gambier's fleet—sixteen ships of the line and twenty-one smaller vessels—exchanged salutes with the Castle of Kronborg, and anchored in Elsinore roads. On the 7th and 8th most of the transports from England arrived, and on

Aug. 12. the 12th Cathcart also sailed into Elsinore, having started in advance of his troops from Rügen. Information from the British Minister at Copenhagen left little hope of a friendly settlement; and on the

Aug. 14. 14th the appearance of Jackson on board the flagship proclaimed the failure of his mission. By that time the first division of the King's German Legion had arrived at Moen Island, and the whole of the force at Rügen had been embarked; whereupon the commanders, in pursuance of their orders, decided to enter upon operations without delay. Bad weather pre-

Aug. 15. vented an immediate movement, but on the 15th the fleet and transports weighed anchor and worked their way up the Sound to Vedboek, a village about midway between Elsinore and Copenhagen, where the greater number of the ships anchored. At the same time a detachment under Rear-admiral Essington, and the transports containing Spencer's brigade,² moved still further

¹ Cathcart to Sec. of State, 6th Aug. (2); Pierrepont to Sec. of State, 5th Aug. (2), 10th, 16th, 21st Aug. 1807.

² Cathcart's force was organised as follows:—

<i>Cavalry Brigade.</i>	Maj.-gen. von Linsingen, 1st, 2nd, 3rd L.D., K.G.L.
<i>Artillery and Engineers.</i>	Maj.-gen. Bloomfield, C.R.A.
<i>First Division.</i>	Lieut.-gen. Sir George Ludlow.

up the Sound to make a diversion. At five o'clock on 1807. the morning of the 16th the disembarkation began ; the Reserve under Sir Arthur Wellesley with one brigade of light artillery being the first to land, and take up a position to cover the landing of the rest. Ludlow's division of infantry followed, together with one brigade only of Baird's division ; Spencer's having been detached temporarily, as already described, while Macfarlane's had not yet arrived. Another light brigade of artillery and one squadron of German dragoons were the next to disembark ; and on the same evening the whole made a short march southward in three columns to invest Copenhagen.

And here a word must be said not only as to the defences of the city, but also as to the forces that were to be engaged on each side. Admiral Gambier was best known in the Navy as a man of extreme Evangelical opinions in the matter of religion, who would heave to his fleet for prayers and distribute tracts about the lower deck. Later he became notorious for his supineness when in command of the attack on the French fleet in Aix roads. Lord Cathcart, his colleague, was at this time fifty-two years of age, in the course of which time he had gathered a wide experience of active service. But he seems to have

<i>Guards' Brigade.</i>	Maj.-gen. Finch, 1/Coldstream Guards, 1/3rd Guards.
<i>1st Brigade.</i>	Brig.-gen. Warde, 1/28th, 1/79th.
<i>Second Division.</i>	Lieut.-gen. Sir David Baird.
<i>2nd Brigade.</i>	Maj.-gen. Grosvenor, 1/4th, 1/23rd.
<i>3rd Brigade.</i>	Maj.-gen. Spencer, 1/32nd, 1/50th, 1/82nd.
<i>4th Brigade.</i>	Brig.-gen. Macfarlane, 1/7th, 1/8th.
<i>Reserve.</i>	Maj.-gen. Sir Arthur Wellesley.
	Brig.-gen. Stewart, 1/43rd, 2/52nd, 1/92nd, 5 cos. 1/95th, 2/95th.
<i>K.G.L.</i>	Maj.-gen. von Drechsel.
<i>1st Brigade.</i>	Colonel du Plat, 6th, 7th, 8th Line Batts.
<i>2nd Brigade.</i>	Colonel von Drieberg, 3rd, 4th, 5th Line Batts.
<i>3rd Brigade.</i>	Colonel von Barsse, 1st and 2nd Line Batts.
<i>4th Brigade.</i>	Colonel von Alten, 1st and 2nd Light Batts.

1807. lost his nerve, for it was noticed, when he joined the expedition, that he was dejected and downcast, full of apprehensions and ominous forebodings, which did not promise well for the speedy accomplishment of his task.¹ Moreover, it seems certain that the attack upon the Danes was distasteful to him, which, though by no means to his discredit as a man, did not add to his activity as a commander. His second, Sir Harry Burrard, we have already known as a steady old Guardsman of no exceptional military talent. Sir David Baird commanded one division of infantry, and Lieutenant-general Ludlow, who had led the brigade of Guards in Egypt, the other. Among the brigadiers were Brent Spencer and Arthur Wellesley, the latter being in command of four and a half choice battalions, under the name of the Reserve, three of which were later to win fame under his orders in the Peninsula.

On the Danish side the regular troops in Copenhagen numbered fewer than five thousand men; but some five thousand of the burghers had been formed into corps, and the whole manhood of a city of one hundred thousand inhabitants was liable to service in the Militia. The city itself lies partly on an angle of the island of Zealand, partly on the island of Amager immediately over against it, the passage between the two forming the harbour and arsenal. The defences towards the sea were very strong. There were blockships, sunk and converted into batteries, to enfilade the passage by which Nelson had approached in 1801; there were regular works on Amager, fitted with the heaviest ordnance, to protect the harbour and flank the left of the line of defence; there was

¹ Jackson's narrative in *Jackson Papers*, P.R.O. Jackson had a low opinion of Cathcart, whom, according to his own account, he was himself obliged to rouse to activity by constant spurring. Jackson himself, however, was an inordinately vain and conceited person, who ended his life as a man with a grievance. But though much must be deducted from his statements, I think it certain that Cathcart was not a very efficient commander.

the Three-Crown battery on a shoal due north 1807. of the town, very powerfully armed; and there was the citadel at the northern end of the town, with a low battery of large mortars and heavy guns to co-operate with the Three-Crown battery in guarding the entrance to the harbour. Towards the land the citadel presented a complete work in perfect repair, with a double ditch of great depth, and outworks fully supplied with guns and ammunition; and from thence along the western front of the city extended ramparts with a deep ditch, occasional outworks, glacis, and covered way. Similar defences, but even stronger, covered the southern face of the city towards Amager, the ramparts being on both fronts provided with sufficient ordnance to protect the angles, enfilade the roads, and deliver a cross-fire in every direction. On the side of Zealand there were three gates, exclusive of the citadel, the approaches to which ran across large and deep inundations. The general appearance of Copenhagen was, therefore, formidable; but there was division of command within the fortress, the nominal Commander-in-chief, General Peimann, being subject to a council of three. Hence the regular troops within reach were not called into the fortress in time, and many precautions essential to a resolute defence were neglected.

Having issued a proclamation setting forth the reluctance of England to enforce her claims by arms, and promising to respect the persons and property of all who abstained from playing a hostile part, Cathcart on the morning of the 17th resumed his advance unopposed, Aug. 17. and invested the town. Ludlow's division occupied the ground from the sea on the south northwards to Frederiksborg, Vanløse, and Gladsaxe; the Reserve filled the space eastward from Gladsaxe to Emdrup; and Baird's division that eastward from Emdrup to Tuborg. Spencer's brigade, which landed in the course of the day at Skovshoved, four or five miles north of the town, also marched into its place on the left of

1807. the line. Headquarters were fixed at Hellerup, a few hundred yards north-west of Tuborg ; the transports were assembled at Skovshoved, where some of the cavalry began to disembark ; and two battalions of the German Legion were left at Charlottenbund, a little to the south of Skovshoved, to cover the landing of the artillery. Every division threw out pickets to its rear in case of an attack by the country-people ; for, though the fleet had been distributed so as to cut off both the continent and the remaining islands of Denmark from Zealand, yet there could be no certainty of preventing small parties from making the passage. Indeed men enough might be collected in Zealand alone to give the besiegers much trouble. The landing of the

Aug. 18. cavalry on the 18th, however, greatly increased the security of the army. The three regiments were quartered at Charlottenbund, Jaegersborg, less than two miles to north and west of it, and Vanløse, from which points they could patrol the principal roads leading from the country into Copenhagen. A single battalion, also of the King's German Legion, was appointed to help them in guarding the passes between the lakes to north-west of the city at Sorgenfri and Kolle Kolle.

The investment had hardly been completed before the garrison made a sortie upon the posts of the British left, supported by gunboats which plied them with grape and round shot. The smaller vessels of the British squadron answered the fire at long range with little effect, and the naval combat was renewed on

Aug. 18. the 18th, when a battery of British field-guns, just landed, compelled the gunboats to retire. On the same day the construction of a battery on the extreme left was begun, and on the two following days guns

Aug. 19. were brought up and mounted. On the 19th Captain Krauchenberg of the Legion with a single squadron scared eight hundred Danish levies into the surrender of themselves and of a cannon foundry which was entrusted to their charge at Frederikswerk ; and on

the 20th came the first important brush with the Danes ^{1807.} from without, a mixed force of raw levies being reported ^{Aug. 20.} near Roskilde. This party was at once charged with great gallantry and dispersed by a squadron of the King's German Legion; but the incident seems to have depressed Cathcart, who informed Gambier on that day that Copenhagen could not be taken without a regular siege, and that he had not the means for conducting it. Gambier replied that, in this case, the Navy would be happy to take the matter in hand; whereupon Cathcart hastily answered that his resources were not so slender as to require naval assistance; and therewith the matter ended. The truth seems to be that the more the General studied his task, the less he liked it. It is evident that he hated the idea of injuring the Danes, and was deeply cast down because they seemed determined not to yield without resistance.

On the 21st Macfarlane's brigade arrived from ^{Aug. 21.} England and disembarked at Skovshoved; and on the morrow the force from Stralsund, being at last complete, landed in Kjöge Bay, a few miles south-west of Copenhagen, from whence it marched on the 23rd to form a second line in rear of the besieging force. On the 22nd also Jackson, Gambier, and Home Popham waited upon Cathcart in a body to urge upon him more vigorous action; and after twenty-four hours' consideration, in the course of which an attack by the Danish gunboats was beaten off by the British squadron, the General decided to take their advice. Before dawn of the 24th the British centre advanced ^{Aug. 24.} from Frederiksborg; and the brigade of Guards occupied the suburbs between that fort and the city, dislodging a picquet of the enemy, which abandoned thirteen small field-guns in its retreat. The whole of the Danish posts then fell back to the inundation; but in the afternoon the garrison made a feeble show of a general sortie by all the outlets from the city, only to be driven back at every point. The British thereupon advanced, and lodged themselves in the suburbs, which

1807. had imprudently been left standing, on the western bank of the inundation. Here they were perfectly screened from sight and protected from fire, though in places within four hundred yards of the ramparts. The distant batteries first built by Cathcart were therefore abandoned, and a new line was chosen within eight hundred yards of the place, and even nearer to it on the flanks of the inundation. The advantage thus given to the besiegers by the apathy of the Danes was fatal to Copenhagen. The batteries of the besieged kept up a constant fire, and the Danish gunboats passing through the channel between Zealand and Amager cannonaded the posts of the Guards, who occupied the suburbs at the south-western angle of the city. But the fire of the Danes was necessarily blind, because the movements of the British were concealed, and these belated efforts at resistance were consequently futile.

Now, however, a more serious danger threatened Aug. 26. force about Borrcarup; and on the 26th Sir Arthur Wellesley was detached with the Reserve, two light brigades of British artillery, and one battalion, eight squadrons, and one battery of Horse Artillery from the German Legion to disperse it. Wellesley divided his force into two detachments, the one under General von Linsingen, the other under his personal command,¹ his intention being to attack the enemy with his own division in front, while Linsingen, fetching a wide compass southward, should gain their rear and cut off their retreat. The movement failed, the enemy having retired southward to Kjöge; and Wellesley was obliged to give Linsingen's detachment a day's halt after an

¹ *Linsingen's detachment*: 3 squadrons cavalry, $\frac{1}{2}$ battery Horse Artillery K.G.L., detachment of 43rd, 5 cos. 2/95th, 6th batt. K.G.L.

Wellesley's detachment: 5 squadrons K.G.L. cavalry, 1 battery R.H.A., $\frac{1}{2}$ battery Horse Artillery K.G.L., detachment of 43rd, 2/52nd, 1/92nd, 1/95th.

exhausting and fruitless march, while he himself fell ^{1807.} back to Roskilde Kro, and extended his force southward to cover the besieging lines against any incursion. Then reversing the positions, though not the functions, of his two columns, he himself took the road along the coast to Kjöge to fall upon the enemy's front, assigning to Linsingen the duty of turning the enemy's left flank by crossing the Kjöge rivulet at Lellinge, about a mile to the north-west.

Marching accordingly on the morning of the 29th, ^{Aug. 29.} Wellesley's German Hussars came upon the Danes on the north side of the town and of the rivulet of Kjöge. The enemy was in some force, showing three or four regular battalions formed in one line, facing to the north, bodies of cavalry upon both flanks, and indications of a large number of men in reserve. The hour agreed upon with Linsingen for the attack being not yet come, Wellesley halted for a space. The appointed time arrived without a sign of his colleague or of any message from him; and, as the Danes showed intentions of moving northward, Wellesley decided to attack at once. Opening fire, therefore, with his artillery, and throwing forward the Ninety-fifth in skirmishing order, he ordered his infantry to advance in single echelon of battalions from the left. The Ninety-second, whose left flank was covered by the sea, led the echelon, but the Danes appear to have made no great resistance, soon retiring to some entrenchments to the north of the town. Here they took up a new position with their front to the east, holding their cavalry in readiness to charge the Ninety-second in flank as soon as that regiment should wheel round to renew the attack. Wellesley met this disposition by transferring his cavalry from his right to his left flank, and ordering the Forty-third to fall back from the centre and form a second line. The Ninety-second then speedily carried the entrenchments; and the Danes retired in disorder into the town, closely followed by the German Hussars and the Ninety-fifth. The entire force of the British then crossed the rivulet, where

1807. Linsingen's detachment, which had been delayed by a broken bridge, overtook Wellesley's and joined in the chase. At Herfolge part of a Danish battalion tried to make a stand in the churchyard, but was speedily surrounded and overpowered; and the rout of the enemy was complete. Great numbers of the Danes were killed and wounded, for the German Hussars were very active in pursuit; and fifteen hundred prisoners were taken. The losses of the British and Germans seem to have been relatively trifling.¹

This success effectually discouraged further attempts

Aug. 31. to relieve the beleaguered city. Two days later the batteries were ready, mounting forty mortars, ten howitzers, and thirty cannon. A summons was then sent to the commandant, adjuring him to spare the city the horrors of a bombardment and renewing the offer made before the siege, namely, that the British force, upon delivery of the Danish fleet, would evacuate Denmark, restore all captured property, public and private, and carry off the fleet only, upon a solemn pledge to return it at the signature of a general peace. The answer was an indignant refusal; but Cathcart, to Jackson's great annoyance, shrank from the inhumanity of a bombardment, and, in order to give the commandant time to think better of his answer, delayed all action until half-past Sept. 2. seven on the evening of the 2nd of September. Then the batteries opened fire. In less than five minutes the town was kindled, and in three hours the conflagration was great. After twelve hours the British batteries Sept. 3. were silent; but on the evening of the 3rd fire was again opened, though with less energy owing to want of ammunition; and the cannonade was prosecuted Sept. 5. with renewed vigour on the 4th. On the 5th General Peimann asked for an armistice of twenty-four hours to Sept. 7. arrange a capitulation, and on the 7th the articles were signed. The Danish fleet and naval stores were to be

¹ The casualties of all kinds from the 16th to the 31st of August did not exceed 2 officers and 27 men killed, 6 officers and 116 men wounded, 21 men missing.

delivered up to the British ; all other property, public ^{1807.} or private, was to be restored on both sides ; and the ^{Sept.} British pledged themselves to evacuate Zealand within six weeks. The whole campaign had cost the British fewer than two hundred killed and wounded.¹

Thus this unpleasant and unquestionably high-handed enterprise was accomplished. None of the British loved their task. Cathcart, as we have seen, loathed the duty imposed upon him ; and the inferior ranks were discontented at his inactivity and at the general discomfort of the campaign. For the men had no tents, though later they built themselves huts, and the officers had been hurried away so quickly that they were unprovided with comforts of any kind. Had Peimann resolved to stand an assault, for which Cathcart had everything in readiness, there would have been an ugly scene of slaughter and disorder, for the troops were ill-tempered, and most of the inhabitants were armed. Indeed the conduct of the men, even during the short occupation, appears not to have been quite exemplary.² Mercifully, however, the Danish commander by timely surrender averted a storm, which might have endured as a lasting reproach to the Army. Meanwhile it seems certain that, with a little more foresight and energy, the Danish Government could have collected troops and improved the defences of Copenhagen to a degree which might have wrecked the plans of the British Government.

After the surrender came a new and unexpected complication. In the course of the siege Denmark declared war upon England ; and this very natural and reasonable action seems to have fallen upon the Ministers at Downing Street as a surprise. On the 27th of August they had ordered Cathcart to send back to the Downs as soon as possible twelve thousand five hundred of his

¹ *Killed . . . 4 officers, 38 N.C.O.s and men, 8 horses.*

Wounded . . . 6 , , 139 , , , 25 , ,

Missing 24 , , ,

² Cathcart to Sec. of State 14th, Oct. 1807. *Jackson Papers.*

1807. men, including the Reserve and the brigade of Guards, Sept. with as much artillery and as much forage as could by any means be spared. The destination of this detachment will be presently discussed ; but meanwhile, upon hearing of Denmark's declaration of war, Ministers became anxious to retain hold of Zealand, and ordered Cathcart to send no troops away without further orders. At the very beginning of the enterprise Castlereagh had enquired of Gambier and Cathcart as to the possibility either of destroying the harbour, docks, and arsenal of Copenhagen, or of making Zealand tenable against France and of keeping a naval force to watch the Belt all through the winter. The two commanders had replied that the guarding of the Belt during the winter would be impossible, and that the occupation of Zealand would require at least thirty thousand troops. They wrote with great decision, and no doubt considered that these objections would be final.

Canning, however, seems to have set his heart upon keeping the island, if possible with the help of Sweden. A new series of detailed questions was therefore sent out both to Admiral and General, all bearing upon the debated point ; and it needed a strong representation from them to show that even a large naval force could not possibly prevent troops from being conveyed from the mainland and from other islands into Zealand, and that therefore the French could gradually concentrate a force strong enough to besiege Copenhagen with success, however large its garrison. The course of the Government's policy then became extremely tortuous. First, on receiving the capitulation, Ministers ordered that it should be fulfilled exactly ; next, they averred that the French were likely to occupy Zealand immediately upon a British evacuation, and that this must be resisted ; but they declared their preference for securing the island through a friendly understanding with Denmark, and despatched an envoy to make liberal overtures to that Court for alliance or neutrality. Next, conceiving that Russia had an equal interest with England in the

neutrality of Denmark, they sent an emissary, Sir ^{1807.} Robert Wilson, to discuss the matter at St. Petersburg, Sept. where, though not ill-received, he was unsuccessful. Next they assumed that Sweden was decidedly concerned in the exclusion of the French from Denmark ; and, in order to commend this opinion to King Gustavus, they engaged themselves to send a force to defend Scania against possible attack from Zealand, and gave Cathcart conditional orders to despatch ten or twelve thousand men to Malmö and Helsingborg. Finally, upon the whole they concluded that, if Denmark refused the British overtures, it might be necessary to reoccupy Zealand with the help of Sweden, and that it would therefore be well for the British troops to remain in Zealand until all arrangements with Sweden were perfected. Against all this stood the objection that, by the capitulation, the British troops were bound to evacuate Zealand by a certain day. Ministers therefore ordered Cathcart either to negotiate for extension of the term of evacuation, or to make some infraction of the treaty by the Danes an excuse for not embarking the troops on the appointed day, or to raise some difficult point in the interpretation of the treaty, and retain possession of the island while the question was referred to England.

The hand of Canning is not difficult to detect under this mass of petty trickiness ; but one and all of his schemes were defeated. The Danish Generals had no power to prolong the term of the British possession of Copenhagen, and they fulfilled their part of the treaty too loyally to give the slightest pretext for any failure of observance on the side of Cathcart. For a few days it seemed likely that a large detachment, chiefly of the King's German Legion, would actually be left on the north shore of the Sound between Helsingborg and Malmö ; but at the decisive moment the King of Sweden declared that he could not furnish it with supplies. Clutching at a last straw, Ministers asked if the island of Hvin in the Sound could be made tenable. Cathcart replied that it could not, adding further that nothing

1807. would be more likely to draw a French force into Sept. Zealand than the presence of an inadequate detachment of British either there or in any Swedish port. All indications, as he said, pointed to an understanding between France and Denmark ; the negotiations with Sweden had broken down ; Russia would not, in Cathcart's opinion, readily believe that it was to her interest to protect Sweden and Denmark, for it was more likely that she would break with England to please France, than break with France to please England. The Danish fleet was secured ; the winter was approaching and the Admiral was anxious to leave the Cattegat. Cathcart in fact had made up his mind that it was hopeless to think of retaining the key of the Baltic ; and, fully conscious that he was risking the displeasure of the Government, he embarked the whole of the troops for England.¹

There can, I think, be no doubt that Cathcart was right. As a Commander-in-chief in the field he had shown no great distinction, but upon this broad question of military policy he gave proof alike of insight, courage, and resolution. He realised, as Ministers did not, that the friendship of Russia was for the present lost, that Denmark was hopelessly estranged, and that the Swedish alliance was a mere encumbrance. King Gustavus was indeed still possessed by his one idea of hostility to Bonaparte ; but the craze of a lunatic is a poor substitute for the goodwill of a people. Suffering and maladministration had alienated all classes of his people from the King and rendered hateful the very name of England. The fate of Sweden was in fact sealed. Russia saw her opportunity to seize the long-coveted Finland, Napoleon perceived that Stralsund and Swedish Pomerania were at last in his power and that he could close the northern shore of Germany wholly to British traffic. It was natural that

¹ Authorities for the last two paragraphs : Sec. of State to Cathcart, 27th Aug., 19th Sept., Cathcart to Castlereagh, 18th, 24th, 25th Sept., 12th, 14th, 15th, 21st, 27th, 31st Oct. 1807.

the English Ministers should strive even against hope ^{1807.} to retain some footing in the Baltic, and it was chivalrous in them—the word, as our diplomatic records can prove, is not too strong—to endeavour as they did to preserve the King of Sweden from the consequences of his own insanity. But to have locked up thirty thousand men in Zealand would have been madness. The island was not self-supporting; and a large naval force would have been necessary to ensure alike their immunity from overwhelming attack and the transmission of their supplies from England. The capture or re-embarkation of these troops could only have been a question of time, and meanwhile they would have needed all the military resources of the Empire to keep them, an inert body, in existence. The original object of the expedition and of Jackson's negotiations, previous to the attack upon Copenhagen, had been simply and solely the possession of the Danish fleet,¹ the capture, that is to say, of the mobile force whereby Napoleon might hope to invade England. But from the capture of a mobile force to the permanent tenure of an enemy's country the step is long. Ministers, it is true, asked very sensibly at first whether the docks and other works at Copenhagen could not be so effectually destroyed that the place should cease to be a base of naval operations; but, when Cathcart answered this in the negative, there was nothing for them but to accept the inevitable and evacuate the country. The principle of defence through offence may be carried too far, as we discovered at Toulon in 1793. But at Toulon there was at least some chance that the counter-revolution might prevail and that the population might be friendly. At Copenhagen there was no hope of anything of the kind. It is therefore unprofitable to belaud Canning's design for the retention of Zealand, and to lament the promptitude with which his military agents² made evacuation inevitable. Cathcart was

¹ *Jackson Papers.*

² I exclude the diplomatic agent, for Jackson was as anxious as

1807. right, for he grasped the true situation from the first; whereas Canning, dazzled by the easy attainment of the object originally proposed, namely the capture of the Danish fleet, was prepared to flounder blindly on into he knew not what chimerical enterprises. To Cathcart's firmness we owe it that in the critical year 1808 we were able to send a force towards a quarter which Charles Stuart had long ago pointed out as the most vulnerable for France, the peninsulas of southern Europe.

Canning to hold Zealand, and boldly opined that it would not require so large a garrison as Cathcart and Gambier had named. But Jackson was a man who never looked beyond his own sphere of action, and was, moreover, troubled, like so many of our agents abroad, by the curse of omniscience.

CHAPTER XVI

THE little success at Copenhagen was welcome in 1807. England, and the more so since it followed close upon the news of the disastrous failure at Buenos Ayres. It was comforting, too, inasmuch as it set at rest immediate alarms of invasion ; and this was important, for of all the bad tidings that poured upon Castlereagh during his first few months of office, from India, from the Dardanelles, from Egypt, and from South America, the worst were outdone by those which came from Tilsit. Happily the British counter-stroke, however cruel to Denmark, fell true and heavy on the quarter at which it was aimed. Napoleon was startled into a burst of virtuous indignation which, read by the light of his published despatches, seems at this distance of time to be infinitely diverting. “ I think,” he wrote on the 26th of August, “ that, if the English go on in this way, we must close all the ports of Europe, even those of Austria, against them, drive every British Minister from the continent, and even arrest all individual Englishmen.”¹ The thrust at Copenhagen had indeed sped home, and was so shrewd that the great man could not conceal how it galled him.

Nevertheless the menace of Napoleon’s alliance with Alexander remained as formidable as ever ; and Cathcart’s orders as to Copenhagen were only three days old when Castlereagh laid before Parliament his measures for meeting the danger. These were quickly passed, and proved to be drastic enough. He proposed to call

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13,079.

1807. upon the British Militia to furnish twenty-one thousand men, and upon the Irish Militia to furnish seven thousand men for the Regular Army ; and to raise in their place thirty-six thousand militiamen by ballot in England and eight thousand, either by ballot or by voluntary enlistment, in Ireland. The temptation to militiamen to enlist in the Line was a bounty of ten pounds, with permission to engage themselves for long or short service at their option, and with a pledge that they should not be drafted from the regiments of their choice. The Commander-in-chief also granted an ensigncy in the Line to every officer of Militia who should bring with him forty volunteers from his regiment ; which was a welcome encouragement alike to officers and men. In order to replenish the Militia thus depleted, the Government offered in Ireland a bounty of four guineas to all voluntary recruits, but made each county responsible for producing its quota within six months, under pain of a fine of £30 for every man deficient. In Great Britain, where the levy was to be raised by ballot, the regulations were severe beyond all precedent. Parochial substitutes were to receive no bounty in excess of £10 ; the fine for exemption was increased to £20 ; and the penalty upon counties that failed to raise their quota within three months was fixed at the enormous figure of £60. Considering that the call upon the United Kingdom was for forty-four thousand men, these fines were almost oppressively high ; but the danger was most urgent, and the Government, with admirable courage, was determined to augment the military forces no matter at what cost of personal unpopularity. The only sop thrown to the country was an enactment that, when the full number of men had been supplied by the counties, the ballot was to be suspended until the 1st of January 1810.

This bold experiment was fairly successful. The Militia, notwithstanding the discouragement which so heavy a draft must have thrown upon its officers, responded most handsomely to the call upon it. No

fewer than thirty-two counties produced five-sixths of 1807. their quotas at once; and, when the returns of the soldiers levied under the Militia Transfer Act of 1807 were finally made up, it was found that of a quota of rather more than twenty-nine thousand men demanded for the Line, not more than sixteen hundred were deficient. But the replenishment of the Militia was a very different matter. The general aversion from personal service was as great as ever; and the traffic in substitutes, with its attendant evils of crimping and insurance, was pursued with frantic activity. Of twenty-six thousand men enrolled in England, three thousand only were principals, the remaining twenty-three thousand being substitutes; and in March 1808, when the levy was held to be more or less complete, there were still eight thousand men deficient of the forty-eight thousand required by the Act. Even so, however, the numerical strength of the defensive force was augmented; for Castlereagh, while drafting three-fifths of the Militia's establishment into the Line, had called for a number equal to three-fourths of that establishment to make good the loss.

Lastly, the revival of the Volunteers, avowedly adopted by Castlereagh as a temporary expedient to meet a sudden and unexpected danger, was, so far as it went, a success. The inherent instability and untrustworthiness of the force was shown by the fact that, when the first wave of enthusiasm had spent itself, its numbers had steadily and rapidly declined. In 1807 the Volunteers were fewer by one hundred and twenty thousand than in 1803; and the reports concerning a great many of the corps were extremely unsatisfactory. Exemption from the ballot, or in other words facility for the evasion of national duty, had by this time become almost the single motive which induced men to join the Volunteer force; and the ranks were filled in many cases by individuals of the most undesirable character. The pay granted by the Government, together with the subscriptions contributed by private munificence,

1807. enabled numbers of men to eke out casual employment by the profits of volunteering ; and the result was that the force had attracted to itself crowds of the idle, the shiftless, and the discontented, who spent their days in discussing the evils of the present time and in conjuring up visions of a golden age when every man should live, without exertion, at the expense of his neighbour. The renewal of the ballot in 1807 naturally awoke a sudden and feverish ardour in thousands of citizens to be enrolled as Volunteers ; but Castlereagh was on his guard against any such ignoble cunning. He encouraged existing regiments to keep their numbers up to their establishment, and granted them facilities and pay to go out upon permanent duty ; but he strictly prohibited the formation of new corps. This decision, of course, provoked much indignation ; but the Minister stood firm, and the Lords - Lieutenant supported him loyally. " The people seem to think," wrote one of them, " that they have the right to become Volunteers by their offers to raise new corps and to exempt themselves from the present and future ballots." The people were speedily undeceived ; and aspirant after aspirant to the command of petty useless Volunteer companies was sent away empty, to be swept, together with his followers, into the net of the ballot. The numerical increase of Volunteers, therefore, during 1807 little exceeded two thousand ; but the decline of the force was arrested, and the truly patriotic men who had submitted themselves freely to training in arms were heartened to increase their efficiency. For this a tribute must be paid to Castlereagh's courage as well as to his good sense. The transfer of more than half of the Militia into the Line brought about a short but very dangerous period of transition, when the Regular battalions had not yet assimilated their flood of new though not untrained recruits, and the Militia battalions, reduced to mere skeletons, had not yet received the men provided for them by the ballot. During this interval the Volunteers constituted the sole defensive

force of England. An Addington would probably ¹⁸⁰⁷ have enrolled, with promise of exemptions and of liberal allowances, every Volunteer who chose to present himself, would have involved the country in untold confusion and expense, and would positively have promoted panic. All these evils were averted by the cool judgment and undaunted spirit of Castlereagh.

With the prospect of a solid increase to the Army of twenty-two thousand men—an increase which was actually realised in February 1808—the next point for Ministers to decide was the use which should be made of this augmented strength. This was an exceedingly perplexing matter, and not the simpler since the situation was perpetually changing. To understand its difficulties aright we must look more closely into the changes wrought by the Treaty of Tilsit, and into their bearing upon British interests and British policy in the Baltic, in Portugal, and in the Mediterranean.

In the Baltic the chief danger had been averted by the seizure of the Danish fleet, and incidentally by the exploration of the Belts by British vessels. Even if the French should now occupy Copenhagen, they had no fleet with which to invade England from it, and they could hardly hope to close the Baltic by holding the Sound alone against a power which had learned the navigation of the Belts. But, on the other hand, Sweden was now liable to be crushed between the two mightiest of continental nations, France and Russia, probably aided by Denmark; and the British Ministers were loth to abandon a faithful though unprofitable ally. The problem was to discover by what possible means they could help Sweden. They had tried, as we have seen, to persuade Gustavus to constrain Denmark to neutrality by occupying Zealand. They had offered to pay for twenty thousand Swedish soldiers to garrison that island, to leave ten thousand British infantry in Scania so as to enable Swedish troops to be spared for this service, and even to cede Surinam to Sweden so as to render the transaction palatable to

1807. the people. These overtures, however, were fruitless ; and Ministers then urged Gustavus to come to an amicable arrangement with Denmark, and to join the British Government in requesting the Tsar to guarantee Denmark's neutrality. The Court of Copenhagen, however, was, pardonably enough, inclined to listen to smooth words from no one but Napoleon, and devoted itself entirely to military preparations ; while the Tsar at the end of October sent a significant letter to Gustavus, to ask whether he was or was not inclined still to maintain the tranquillity of the Baltic according to the treaties of 1780 and 1800. Moreover, without awaiting a reply, Alexander began to concentrate troops upon the frontier of Finland. The true purport of his question, of course, amounted to this : Did Sweden intend to remain faithful to England or to turn against her ? and the obvious interpretation to be placed on the Russian movement towards Finland was that, unless Sweden deserted England, the Tsar and the rest of the Baltic powers would attack her without delay.

Nov. 2. On the 2nd of November Russia formally declared war upon England ; and this gave rise to fresh alarm among the Swedes as to the danger in which their country might thereby be involved. Still the poor King remained staunch to the British alliance, defying the wrath of the Tsar and of all his allies ; and there were sanguine spirits in Sweden who hoped that hostilities with Russia might even yet be their salvation, since the general hatred of that power by all classes might rally the people to the royal standard, and give the war a national character. But under such a leader a national movement was impossible ; and, moreover, the enemies of Sweden were too many. France at the end of October had signed a treaty of alliance with Denmark, engaging her to declare war against Sweden if Russia should declare it ; and the steady advance of Russian troops towards Finland showed clearly enough the intentions of the Tsar. At the beginning of December King Gustavus appealed piteously to England for help,

demanding through his Minister in London a subsidy ^{1807.} of two millions in specie at once, and troops and ships in the ensuing spring. Ministers answered that they would give as large a sum as they could afford, and would certainly send a fleet, but that it was too late now to supply British troops after the King's refusal of such aid only a few weeks back. So matters stood at the end of the year ; England and Sweden being both of them heartily sick of an alliance which had brought nothing but danger and loss to each party, and yet neither of them willing to seem faithless or unchivalrous towards the other. The situation had its ludicrous and also its pathetic side ; for the hearts of the Ministers of both countries misgave them that, in prolonging it, they were failing in patriotic duty.

At the end of December, however, the Tsar again called upon Sweden to join the Confederated Powers in shutting the Baltic against England. Gustavus sent no reply ; and Alexander then made fresh overtures to England for peace, which were rejected upon the ground that England's allies were not included in the proposed negotiation. Canning at once seized the opportunity to report the fact to Stockholm,¹ and to intimate that, if Gustavus held himself bound to the English alliance by feelings not of interest but of honour only, then he might hold himself freely acquitted by England of all obligations and at liberty to come to any arrangement with Russia that might be consistent with his own dignity and the good of his people. But the King was by no means disposed to such a course ; nor was he wholly without justification. Public feeling in St. Petersburg was averse from war with Sweden ; and Denmark did not at all relish the prospect, which she knew to be very probable, of a French army being quartered in Zealand, for the double purpose of protecting the island and furnishing a base for the invasion of Scania as soon as Russia should invade Finland. For the second time, therefore, Gustavus repelled the Tsar's advances

¹ Sec. of State to Thornton, 15th Jan. 1808.

1808. towards negotiation ; and from that moment his fate was sealed. On the 8th of February 1808 a treaty was signed whereby England agreed to pay Sweden a subsidy of £1,200,000 for the support of her naval and military preparations ; and in the hands of a competent leader much, no doubt, might have been effected with this sum. But, seeing that all previous subsidies brought to Stockholm had been utterly wasted, it was unlikely that this one would be expended to any profit ; and, whatever might be the secret feelings of Russia and Denmark, it was certain that, so far as Sweden was concerned, the will of Napoleon would be law to both of those powers. The ruin of Sweden, therefore, was inevitable ; and it was not difficult for British Ministers to foresee that their preliminary negotiations with the King for its defence would pursue an unsatisfactory course. Here, therefore, they stood committed with practical certainty to unprofitable operations of some kind in the Baltic.¹

Meanwhile a second victim of the Treaty of Tilsit also claimed immediate attention. Portugal, another friend of Britain, but as impotent for military purposes as Sweden, was for Napoleon's ends to be forced into acceptance of the Continental System, and Lisbon was to go the way of Stralsund. The task seemed unlikely to tax the Emperor's resources very severely. Portugal had long been governed, owing to the insanity of Queen Maria, by her son John, the Prince Regent of the House of Braganza, a weak and irresolute man, who was ruled in his turn chiefly by one Lobato, an obscure member of his household.² His chief minister was d'Araujo, a man of uncommon accomplishments and ability, but tortuous in his conduct. If there was one thing certainly to be reckoned within Bonaparte's policy,

¹ The contents of the preceding paragraphs concerning Sweden are based entirely on the correspondence between the British Minister and the Foreign Office. *F.O. Sweden*, vols. 41-43, 27th Oct. 1807 to 9th Feb. 1808.

² Lord Strangford describes him simply as *valet de chambre*.

it was that he would take vengeance upon Portugal as 1807. soon as the affairs of Central Europe should give him leisure ; yet neither d'Araujo nor his royal master could be persuaded to prepare their country against the coming danger. Both professed a conviction that Napoleon for some mysterious reason would spare Portugal ; adding that, if he did not, then it was useless to struggle, for, where Prussia had failed, Portugal could not hope to succeed. The British Ambassador, Lord Strangford, tried in vain to rouse them to a sense of their peril. They traded upon their own helplessness, trusting that if Napoleon were hard upon them, England would at least be merciful. They undertook, therefore, if Napoleon called upon them to close their ports to England, to send an ambassador to London to beg for permission to comply ; promising, in compensation for this apparent hostility, to concede to England great commercial privileges upon the conclusion of peace. In secret they believed that England would be forced to come to terms with France before severe pressure could be placed upon Portugal ; and in the strength of this delusion they resolved to continue their policy of paltering with both parties.¹

Ten days after the signature of the Treaty of Tilsit Napoleon struck his first blow. On the 19th of July he caused the Portuguese Ambassador at Paris to be informed that, unless his Government closed its ports to British merchandise and sequestered all British property within its dominions, France would declare war. Ten days later he directed the formation of an army at Bayonne, under Marshal Junot, to carry his threat into execution ;² and finally on the 12th of August he sent a formal ultimatum to Lisbon requiring, in addition to his previous demands, that Portugal should declare war against England. There was, by the middle of August, therefore, no doubt as to the Emperor's meaning ; but the Regent still counted upon England's submission,

¹ F.O. *Portugal*, Strangford to Sec. of State, 21st Jan., 25th July 1807.

² *Corres. de Napoléon*, 12,947.

1807. until a strong despatch from Canning convinced him that she had no intention of being constrained to peace with France. The Regent entreated that England would be generous ; and Strangford hinted to Canning that it might be worth while not to press Prince John for alliance or friendship but to allow him to yield to Napoleon, and to seek in return trading stations in Brazil, with other commercial advantages. At length, in response to Strangford's remonstrances, the Regent resolved to answer Napoleon that, rather than sequestrate the property of British subjects in Portugal, he would abandon his European possessions and retire to Brazil ; and he further pledged himself to Strangford that in no circumstances would he be guilty of the act of confiscation.¹

This was exactly what the British Ministers desired. Brazil, as they hoped, would develop rapidly into a great empire which, protected by the British Navy, would at once open new markets to British trade and harass, if not conquer, Spanish South America. Again, the departure of the Regent and the substitution of a Council of Regency might set up an efficient in lieu of an inefficient government, which in its turn might kindle national feeling and stimulate national resistance to France and to Spain, her ally. Meanwhile the necessity for escorting the Royal emigrants to Rio Janeiro would remove the Portuguese fleet beyond the reach of Napoleon's hand, and obviate the disagreeable necessity of seizing it by force of arms, as had been done at Copenhagen with the fleet of Denmark. No sooner, therefore, was the Regent's resolution reported to Ministers than they despatched orders to Sir John

Aug. 19. Moore to embark eight thousand men from Sicily, as soon as Fraser's corps should have returned from Egypt, to sail with them to Gibraltar, and there to await orders. Their intention was that a force should be near at hand to cover the embarkation of the family of Braganza or, in case of the Regent's recalcitrance, to awe him into surrender of his fleet.

¹ Strangford to Sec. of State, 20th, 21st Aug. 1807.

The Portuguese Government likewise embraced the 1807. project of emigration warmly for the time, wishing for a pretext for setting its fleet in order. At heart the Regent still clung to his hope of remaining upon good terms with both parties, or, if that were impossible, of siding with the stronger. If Napoleon prevailed, then the ships of war would be useful to defend Lisbon against the British ; if England were too strong or too clever for him, then they would serve as his convoy to Brazil. There was therefore feverish activity in the dockyards at Lisbon during August and September, but no movement of Portuguese troops towards the frontier nor sign of military preparation. This rather suspicious circumstance was explained by d'Araujo to signify nothing more than the readiness of the royal family to migrate to South America, whither he declared that the Regent's eldest son, the Prince of Beira, and his daughters would be despatched at all events. But, as the British Cabinet pressed the Regent to resolve definitely upon quitting Europe for the New World, the poor creature became restive. England, he said, wished him to sacrifice himself in order that she might increase her trade : if driven to extremity he had made up his mind to go ; but his religious feelings and his duty forbade him to abandon his people until the last moment. These were worthy and honourable sentiments, but they did not prevail with Strangford. "England has treated you with great forbearance," he said to the unhappy Prince John ; "but, if you become the vassal of France, that forbearance will cease." On the other hand, the ambassadors of France and Spain warned the Regent at his peril not to defy them, and, on receiving an ambiguous reply, demanded their passports, whereupon Portuguese paper money fell instantly from eight to thirty per cent discount. However, the die seemed to be cast. The Regent consented to the instant departure of the Prince of Beira ; and, since the British were anxious to hold Madeira in pledge for the safety of their mercantile

1807. shipping, orders were sent to the Governor of that island to capitulate to any British expedition which should be sent against it.¹

Oct. Then in the first days of October came the news of the British reverse at Buenos Ayres ; and the unhappy ruler of Portugal again began to waver. The naval preparations were discontinued, but on the other hand the Portuguese cruising fleet came into Lisbon, ready to fight the British or to be captured by the French. Strangford urged strongly that it should be sent away at once with the Prince of Beira on board. The Regent, very nervous over a report that an expedition was preparing in England, retorted by requiring of him a pledge that, if the Prince were despatched with part of the fleet, the British would not send a squadron to capture the remainder. Strangford, in the absence of orders from London, was carrying matters with a high hand, in order to impart the greater value to future concessions. He refused to give any undertaking of the kind ; and from that time, though not entirely for that reason, the Portuguese Government at Lisbon secretly abandoned their friendly attitude towards England and inclined decidedly towards the side of France.

In London, on the contrary, the Portuguese Minister was coming to an agreement with the British Cabinet that his country should not be pressed too hardly by England, and that the closing of her ports should not be construed as an unfriendly act. A letter from the Prince Regent to King George the Third had paved the way for this understanding, through the promise that, in compensation for the exclusion of British manufactures from Portugal, the markets of Brazil should be thrown

Oct. 22. open to them ; and on the 22nd of October the matter was finally concluded by a secret convention to the following effect. The British Government engaged itself to send no expedition against any Portuguese possession until France should declare war or Portugal

¹ Strangford to Sec. of State, 22nd, 29th Aug., 8th, 21st, 25th, 26th, 27th Sept. 1807.

should close her ports to British shipping ; and, if any 1807. such expedition should be found necessary, due notice of the fact was to be given to the Portuguese Ambassador in London. On the other hand, Portugal bound herself to send no reinforcements to Madeira or to Brazil, but to give orders to Madeira to surrender to a British expedition. Should the Prince Regent or any of his family migrate to Brazil, the British Government undertook to send six line-of-battle ships and to hold five thousand men in readiness to cover the embarkation ; and it was provided by a declaratory note that, in this case, the principal forts commanding the place of embarkation should be delivered to a British garrison. Should Portugal be compelled to close her ports to England, British troops were to be admitted to Madeira immediately after ratification of the convention, to hold the island in pledge until a general peace. The Prince Regent was to send half of his fleet to Brazil at once, retaining the remaining half armed in the Tagus, so as to join with the British men-of-war in escorting him to Brazil if necessary. Furthermore, he bound himself not to surrender any portion of his military or mercantile marine to France nor to any other power, but either to take the whole to Brazil in case of his emigration, or to leave such part as he could not carry with him in pledge to the British. When the Braganzas should be established at Brazil, the British Government agreed to uphold their rights to the Kingdom of Portugal, and to preserve friendly relations with the Regency meanwhile. A clause awarding commercial advantages to England in Brazil was signed by the Portuguese Minister only subject to ratification, for the Regent, in spite of distinct promises made to the British Government upon the question, had neglected to give him any instructions.¹

Napoleon on his side had been anything but idle. On the 17th of October he received, or professed to have received, intelligence (which was wholly inaccurate)

¹ Sec. of State to Strangford, 22nd Oct. 1807.

1807. that Portugal had declared war against England, and dismissed the British Ambassador. "That is not enough," he wrote to Junot; "continue your march. I have reason to believe that Portugal has an understanding with England, to give time for the English troops to come from Copenhagen. You must be at Lisbon by the 1st of December, be it as friend or as enemy."¹ Evidently the Emperor had received information of the orders, sent to Cathcart on the 27th of August, for the detachment of ten thousand men from Copenhagen at the earliest possible moment; and he was growing nervous. Obedient to his commands,

Oct. 19. Junot crossed the Bidassoa on the 19th of October, and on the following day Napoleon declared war upon Portugal.

The French army of Portugal, for so we may now call it, was of inferior quality, being composed in great measure of odd companies and squadrons massed together into provisional battalions and regiments. In truth the military resources of France were overtaxed by the requirements of Napoleon's vast though unstable empire; and the despatch of such a force into a country which, if not actually hostile, could not with certainty be considered friendly, was an extremely hazardous venture. But Portugal under the rule of the Prince Regent was, from a military standpoint, in a hopeless state; and Napoleon counted not only on this, but also upon the assistance of Spain, which events promised to make easy of acquisition. For some months past an emissary, bearing the credentials of King Charles but in reality merely an agent of Godoy, had been negotiating at Paris for a partition of Portugal between France and Spain. The object of the Prince of the Peace was simple enough. He desired to secure himself against all possible accidents by acquiring certain Portuguese provinces for his own share, with elevation to the rank of a sovereign prince. To Napoleon the project commended itself for many

¹ *Corres. de Napoleon*, 13,267.

reasons. First, he would be sure of securing the most powerful man in Spain for his own interests. Secondly, since his hold upon Italy, and in particular upon the port of Leghorn, was somewhat weakened by the fact that the Kingdom of Etruria was in the hands of a branch of the Spanish royal family, it suited him well to take Etruria under his own immediate government, while giving other of the Portuguese provinces as compensation to the dispossessed King. A grant of suzerainty over the whole of Portugal to the King of Spain would reconcile that monarch to the change, and would be advantageous to himself against the day when he should, pursuant to his vow, oust the Bourbons from the throne of Spain. By the end of September¹ the matter was so far advanced towards a settlement that Junot was able to march, as we have seen, through Spanish territory upon Lisbon; and Napoleon did not shrink from calling on King Charles to order Spanish troops to join the Marshal at Burgos.² The negotiation was finally brought to an issue on the 27th of October, when a secret Convention between France and Spain was signed at Fontainebleau. It ran to the following effect. The Portuguese provinces of Alemtejo and Algarve were to be ceded in sovereignty to Godoy; the province of Entre Minho y Douro was to pass in sovereignty to the King of Etruria, he ceding Etruria in his turn to Napoleon; and the rest of Portugal was to remain sequestered in the hands of France pending the conclusion of a general peace. To secure these objects Spain was to furnish an army of twenty-seven thousand, and France an army of twenty-eight thousand men; besides which the Emperor engaged himself to concentrate at Bayonne, by the 20th of November at latest, a second corps of forty thousand men.

But meanwhile there supervened a curious complication which served with fatal facility to hasten Napoleon into premature realisation of his ultimate aims. The Royal Family of Spain had for years been distracted

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13, 181.

² *Ibid.* 13, 243.

1807. by domestic quarrels. The ascendancy of Godoy over the King and Queen was bitterly resented by their eldest son Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias ; and the death of Ferdinand's Princess in 1806 opened a fresh cause of disagreement between the favourite and the heir-apparent over the choice of a second wife. Under the guidance of a subtle ecclesiastic, Canon Escoiquiz, the Prince had formed a party about and beyond the Court for the overthrow of Godoy ; and his own wish was to secure a powerful protector by a matrimonial alliance with the house of Bonaparte. At last he took the step of writing to his father a letter, which he had not the courage to place in his hands, in denunciation of Godoy, and went to the further length of signing an undated warrant for the arrest of the favourite in the event of King Charles's death. Having thus with trembling temerity laid the train, he invoked the help of a stronger

Oct. 11. hand to fire it. On the 11th of October he addressed an abject letter to Napoleon complaining of the influence that evil men had obtained over his father, and asking for the Emperor's intervention to put an end to it. He also hinted at his desire to marry a Bonaparte, but begged Napoleon at the same time to keep the communication secret, lest it should be interpreted as disloyal to King Charles. Godoy knew nothing of this letter, but being aware of the machinations of Ferdinand's party, thought that they had gone far enough, and

Oct. 29. on the 29th of October obtained an order from the King for the arrest of the Prince. The warrant for Godoy's own arrest and other incriminating documents being found among Ferdinand's papers, the miserable old King on the same day wrote likewise to Napoleon accusing his son of treason and intended assassination, and also imploring the advice and help of the omnipotent Emperor.

This letter reached Napoleon before that of Ferdinand, but the two together convinced him that a stroke of good luck had made the dethronement of the Spanish Bourbons a comparatively simple matter ; and he was not slow to seize the opportunity thus offered

him. Under pretext of an invasion of Portugal, he 1807. would find no difficulty in filling Spain with his troops; and he had projected the formation of a second army at Bayonne ten days before the signature of the Treaty Oct. 16. of Fontainebleau.¹ With the principal fortresses of the country in his hands, the transfer of the sovereignty to one of his brothers would, as he promised himself, be easy. Meanwhile he urged Junot above all to hasten his march, lest the British should anticipate him at Lisbon by landing troops from Copenhagen. "Lisbon is everything," he wrote on the 31st of October. "The march must not be delayed for a single day under pretext of want of supplies," he added a few days later with the calm assurance of one who had long been content to let his armies subsist by marauding; "twenty thousand men can live anywhere, even in a desert. . . . You must march straight to Lisbon, and, when you arrive there, seize the fleet and arsenals. . . . Your advance has been far too slow; ten days are precious; all the British troops of the Copenhagen expedition have returned to England."²

So far had matters gone when, on the 2nd of Nov. 2. November, Strangford received the text of the British Convention with Portugal. Together with it came a long despatch from Canning setting forth, in absurdly extravagant terms, the advantages which would accrue to the Prince Regent by emigration to Brazil, but stating also in unmistakable language that England was quite prepared to defy the whole of Europe, and would not be forced into making terms with Napoleon by the desertion of Portugal. The British Ambassador at Lisbon had suffered many things during the last fortnight of October. A royal proclamation had closed all Portuguese ports to England; and Strangford, having no instructions to guide him in this event, had replied by a sarcastic protest. He had urged that the

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13,258.

² *Ibid.* 13,267, 13,314, 13,327, 13,340, 17th, 31st Oct., 5th, 8th Nov. 1807.

1807. Portuguese fleet should be sent from Lisbon to a place of safety, and had been put off with quibbles. He had heard daily announcements of the departure of the Prince of Beira for Brazil ; he had seen the ships drop down the Tagus as if to sail ; he had witnessed preparations for a farewell entertainment ; but still the Prince had not departed. And now he was instructed to extort from the unwilling Regent the ratification of the Convention and to insist upon the emigration of the Prince himself to Brazil. The stars in their courses fought against him. The Portuguese Ambassador at Paris

Nov. 2. returned on the 2nd of November with fearful descriptions of Napoleon's wrath and of his threats to sweep away the house of Braganza unless his demands were instantly accorded ; and there was reason to believe that he was the bearer also of the Emperor's orders concerning the Portuguese fleet in the Tagus. Preparations for the defence of Lisbon were pushed forward with feverish haste, but these were more threatening to

Nov. 5. a British fleet than to a French army. On the 5th of November the Portuguese batteries fired upon a British frigate which approached within range ; and, as luck would have it, two British privateers, observing the act, at once took possession of two Brazilian merchantmen. Most of the British merchants had already removed themselves and their property ; and Strangford did his best to hasten away the remainder, for he guessed that the storm would soon break. Within twenty-four

Nov. 6. hours d'Araujo announced to him that it was the Regent's intention to forbid British subjects to leave the country and to place them under surveillance ; and the Minister hinted further that the departure of Strangford himself would be a great relief, since it would banish all suspicion of collusion between Portugal and England.¹

In the face of these difficulties the Ambassador took a high tone, knowing the irresolution of the Regent.

¹ Sec. of State to Strangford, 22nd Oct. ; Strangford to Sec. of State, 14th, 27th, 28th Oct., 2nd, 5th Nov. 1807.

“ His Royal Highness had better dismiss me,” he said. 1807. “ I am quite prepared to go as soon as a British frigate arrives ” ; and he wrote to Admiral Purvis, who was blockading Cadiz, for a ship to convey him to England. The Regent now heaped insult after insult upon the British in the hope of appeasing France. On the 8th Nov. 8. of November he laid an embargo upon all British ships in the Tagus, and issued orders for the detention of all British subjects and British property ; signing the decrees reluctantly and with great agony of mind, but none the less signing them. Strangford on the 10th Nov. 10. applied for his passports, which were handed to him in a few hours ; and permission was given for the *Raven* frigate to enter the port and embark the staff of the Embassy for England. The rupture seemed to be finally complete. Yet on the same day Strangford reported that the Portuguese Government was almost resolved upon emigration, if the French should pass the frontier. So far as was known, Junot was halted at Salamanca ; and the Regent still hoped that his decree against British subjects might deliver Portugal from invasion. But, if he should prove to be wrong, he was resolved to throw himself upon the generosity of England.¹

Within the same twenty-four hours, a new actor appeared upon the scene. The Mediterranean squadron of Russia under Admiral Siniavin showed itself suddenly in the Tagus, bound, according to the report of its officers, for the Baltic, but driven into port by bad weather. In the course of the next day more Russian ships came in, making in all nine ships of the line and two frigates. Strangford took no great account of the matter at the moment, for it was not yet known at Lisbon, nor could it have been known to Siniavin, that on the 2nd of November the Tsar had declared war upon England. Heavy weather prevented the *Raven* from coming to take the Ambassador on board, and compelled him to remain at his post. At last,

¹ Strangford to Sec. of State, 6th, 9th, 10th Nov. 1807.

1807. after six days of tension, there arrived off the port not Nov. 16. the frigate but a squadron of six ships of the line under Sidney Smith, who was the bearer not only of strong despatches, but of drastic instructions. Canning had been apprised of the change of attitude in the Portuguese Government, and was determined to endure no trifling. "D'Araujo must not think" (such was the purport of his orders to Strangford) "that he can declare 'nominal war' against us with impunity. As regards the Convention, all we ask, besides Madeira, is compensation to repay us for the damage done to Britain by the closing of the Portuguese ports, and to buy off our declaration of hostilities. But if Portugal declares war, we shall treat her with extremity of war. If we are to forbear any longer, the Convention must be faithfully executed. Half of the Portuguese fleet must sail for Brazil upon notification of the arrival of Sidney Smith's squadron. If it does not, you must use your influence to contrive that it shall be surrendered to our custody, to be restored upon the signature of a general peace. But in one way or another the Convention must be executed, and the fleet must be saved. If a single ship falls, by connivance of the Portuguese Government into French hands, we shall seek satisfaction by arms."

The instructions to Sidney Smith were of a character no less resolute. He was directed, in the first instance, merely to report that he had brought his squadron to escort the Royal Family to Brazil, pursuant to the Convention, and that he wished to concert arrangements with the Portuguese officers for that purpose. If no answer were returned, he was to send a second note, warning the Government that any delay in sending away half of the Portuguese fleet to Brazil would be treated as a breach of the Convention. If the Regent should have declined to ratify the Convention, he was to blockade Lisbon and allow no relaxation until every Portuguese and Brazilian ship had been delivered to him, in deposit until peace should be concluded. In the last resort, if

ratification of the Convention should be refused, or 1807. execution of its conditions unduly delayed after ratification, he was authorised to force his way into the Tagus and to bring away the shipping by compulsion. For this purpose reinforcements were promised to him from England, if necessary, and Strangford was empowered to summon Moore from Gibraltar. In case Moore should not have arrived, a force of the same strength as his detachment was held in readiness to sail from England.¹

The days that followed were most critical. Sidney Smith had no sooner appeared, than the Regent sent a messenger to Paris to represent that he had complied with all the demands of France and fortified the Tagus against any attacks by sea, and to beg for mercy. The concentration of Portuguese troops in Lisbon and the repair of the defences continued; but the officers were wholly inefficient, and there was not ammunition for one half of the additional guns that had been mounted. Moreover, the accumulation of men in the city, coupled with the arrival of the Russian fleet, caused a scarcity of provisions; and there was discontent which a blockade would probably convert into tumult. Again, Strangford had now reason to form grave suspicions as to the significance of the sudden advent of the Russian fleet itself. He was convinced that the Portuguese Government was privy to it; and various circumstances seemed to point to the probability that the entire movement had been arranged at Paris.² Lastly, d'Araujo became so importunate for Strangford's departure that on the 17th the ambassador hired a fishing-vessel, and, after taking measures to maintain communication with his intelligencers in Lisbon and elsewhere, sailed away on the morning of the 18th in search of the British Nov. 17. Nov. 18. squadron. After several hours of a dangerous passage he overtook the flagship, and recommended Sidney

¹ Sec. of State to Strangford, 7th, 9th Nov.; to Sidney Smith, 6th Nov. 1807.

² See *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13,339.

1807. Smith to notify the Government in Lisbon that, as soon
Nov. 18. as the French and Spanish armies crossed the frontier, he
should treat Portugal as part of France and blockade her
ports rigorously. Before the Admiral could comply,
a despatch arrived from Canning positively ordering
this very measure, and sending a warning to the Regent
that the blockade would be continued until the whole of
the Portuguese marine should be surrendered. That
there might be no mistake as to the intentions of
England, it was added further that, if Portugal with-
drew her Minister from London, in obedience to
Napoleon's orders, the act would be construed as a
declaration of war.¹

Thus matters were brought to a crisis at last. Sidney
Smith duly sent his note to the Portuguese Government;
some provision-ships were stopped at the mouth of the
Tagus; and there was the greatest distress and alarm
in Lisbon. But the blockade of the Tagus in the winter
was so difficult a matter that Ambassador and Admiral
agreed upon the necessity of an early attack upon the
Portuguese shipping; and Strangford pressed Sidney
Smith not only to summon Moore's force from Gibraltar
without delay, but at the same time to ask also for
the troops that had been promised from England.
Simultaneously, though his official relations with the
Regent had been severed, he resolved to seek an inter-
view with the Portuguese ruler as a private individual,
and to make a final appeal to him either to emigrate
or to surrender his fleet to the temporary custody of
England.

It was a wise, and as the event proved, a fortunate
decision. During the early days of November, Junot
had been marching leisurely upon Ciudad Rodrigo.

Nov. 19. Arriving there on the 19th of the month he found the
Emperor's orders to hasten with all speed to Lisbon; and
he obeyed them to the letter. Instantly he hurried his
unhappy troops forward under incessant rain, through

¹ Strangford to Sec. of State, 17th, 20th Nov.; Sec. of State to
Strangford, 12th Nov. 1807.

a rugged and miserable country, over execrable roads 1807. and across unbridged torrents, acting remorselessly upon his master's maxim that twenty thousand men could live in a desert. Within little more than a week he had reduced his army by sheer hardship and starvation to a mob of feeble, undisciplined stragglers, without shoes on their feet, without clothes on their backs, without ammunition in their pouches, and with arms ruined by bad usage. It was such a mob as a peasantry armed with cudgels might have annihilated ; yet it was left unmolested. A few of the Portuguese troops were in Alemtejo, prepared to resist the invasion of the Spaniards ; the remainder, some fourteen thousand men, were in and about Lisbon, designed to defend the city against the British. Hence there was not a man to oppose the French advance, and, even if there had been, the irresolution of the Regent would have paralysed all military operations. The *Moniteur* had announced that the house of Braganza had ceased to reign ; and a French army had crossed the frontier. These bare facts alone were sufficient to throw the Portuguese Government into hopeless panic and confusion.

When, therefore, Strangford, after much delay through stormy weather, arrived in Lisbon by permission on the 28th of November, he found that the Royal Nov. 28. Family, the Regent excepted, was already on board ship, and that the streets were full of armed men seeking only some definite object on which to vent their sullen discontent. There was in fact every sign that unless the Prince embarked at once, his departure would be prevented by a popular insurrection. With some trouble Strangford traced d'Araujo on board one of the ships, and learned from him that emigration had been finally resolved on from the moment when the French crossed the frontier ; that a decree for the appointment of a Regency had been prepared, but not promulgated, for the Regent still nourished hopes of an accommodation with France ; and finally that His Royal Highness desired to know, as well he might, from the Ambassador's

1807. own mouth, whether he was to be treated by the British
 Nov. 28. as friend or as enemy. Fearful lest the long-desired project of emigration should be defeated at the last moment by the incorrigible indecision of the Prince, Strangford wrote at once to the unhappy man and promised him in King George's name protection, assistance, friendship, and forgiveness for past offences, on condition that he should sail for Brazil within five hours. Then hastening to him in person, he so wrought upon his fears by lurid accounts of the French army and of the tumult in Lisbon, and upon his hopes by a description of the welcome that awaited him from the British fleet, that he at last persuaded him to go on board. To the last the miserable Prince sought desperately for some pretext that might deliver him from exile; but Strangford clung tenaciously to his elbow, and did not leave him until he had sailed with him over the bar.

On the 28th a proclamation announced Prince John's departure for Brazil and the appointment of
 Nov. 29. a Council of Regency; and on the 29th the Portuguese fleet—twelve ships of war and over thirty smaller craft—put out to sea, escorted by the British squadron. The vessels were still in full view from the shore when
 Nov. 30. on the 30th Junot, at the head of a few staggering emaciated soldiers, marched into Lisbon. He had missed his prize by a few hours only. Indeed, so stormy was the weather that, if Strangford had granted eight hours instead of five for the embarkation of the Prince, the ships would have been unable to sail. "Junot will have succeeded indeed," Napoleon had written a month before, "if he becomes master of the Portuguese fleet." But for the firmness of Strangford, the Emperor would have had his desire.¹

Seeing that the British were within measurable distance of employing force to seize the Portuguese

¹ Strangford to Sec. of State, 21st, 29th, 30th Nov. 1807; Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon*, ii. 120.

ships, it will be asked where was Moore with his eight thousand men¹ from Sicily? The answer shows how far-reaching were the mistakes of the Ministry of All the Talents. Compelled to await the return of Fraser's force from Egypt, Moore was unable to sail from Messina until the 25th of October; and, being further delayed by contrary winds, did not reach Gibraltar until the 1st of December. There he found not a word Dec. 1. of intelligence from the Tagus; neither Sidney Smith nor the Ambassador having taken the trouble to send a message of any kind either to him, or to Admiral Purvis, who was blockading Cadiz, or to Sir Hew Dalrymple, the Governor of Gibraltar. Considering the circumstances, the neglect of Sidney Smith in this instance appears almost criminal, for the entire issue at Lisbon might well have turned upon the arrival of Moore's battalions; and, knowing the man as we do, we shall probably not be wrong in ascribing his conduct to his incorrigible jealousy and selfishness. Dalrymple's information, which, so far as it went, was perfectly correct, was that the general attitude of Portugal was decidedly hostile to England, and that troops had been withdrawn from the frontier and concentrated in the forts at Lisbon to resist any attack. Over and above this, two letters of instructions had arrived for Moore from England. The first of these, dated the 8th of October, bade him leave two of his battalions at Gibraltar and return with the remainder to England. The second, dated the 7th of November, directed him

¹ The embarkation return was as follows:—

R.A.	.	.	.	301	20th Foot	.	.	.	792
Staff Corps	.	.	.	30	2/35th	.	.	.	557
1st Guards—					1/52nd	.	.	.	1018
Flank batt.	.	.	.	720	1/61st	.	.	.	943
1st batt.	.	.	.	884	2/78th	.	.	.	588
3rd batt.	.	.	.	871	Watteville's	.	.	.	826
Total	.	.		7530	rank and file.				
Add $\frac{1}{2}$	.	.		940					

8470 all ranks.

1807. to be ready to land five thousand men in the Tagus in order to cover the flight of the Braganzas, and to prepare a corps of three thousand men to sail with them to Madeira, which island, upon the appearance of so large an armament, would at once surrender. But if Sidney Smith should ask for his entire force in the Tagus, Moore was to comply, and to work there in concert with the squadron. Much puzzled between these orders and the purport of Dalrymple's intelligence, the General, after only a few hours' stay at Gibraltar, sailed for Lisbon to make inquiries for himself; and meeting

Dec. 8. the *Foudroyant* a few miles from the port on the 8th, at length learned all that had passed. Returning to Gibraltar, in due time he received a third letter from Castlereagh of the 16th of November, which set his doubts at rest. The capture of Madeira had been entrusted to another expedition, and he was free to leave two of his battalions at Gibraltar and bring home the rest. He sailed accordingly a few days later, and arrived in England before the end of the year. General Beresford meanwhile sailed for Madeira from England with thirty-six hundred men,¹ and, arriving before the

Dec. 24. island on the 24th of December, received its surrender upon pledge that it should be restored at the end of the war. Two battalions² were left there as a garrison; and, with the exception of this dependency, it may be said that the British Government had resigned itself to the abandonment of Portugal.³

It should seem further that Ministers were strongly disposed to abandon Sicily also, for the withdrawal of eight thousand men from that garrison signified the hazard of nothing less. In truth Moore's reports from Messina, after he had succeeded Fox in command of the Mediterranean in July 1807, were anything but en-

¹ R.A. 1/3rd, 11th, 1/25th, 1/63rd.

² 1/3rd, 11th. The Buffs, as shall presently be seen, were very soon sent to join Sir Arthur Wellesley in Portugal.

³ Sec. of State to Moore, 8th Oct., 7th, 16th Nov.; Moore to Sec. of State, 4th, 11th Dec. 1807.

couraging. Mr. Drummond, the Minister at Palermo, 1807. was now so thoroughly subservient to the Queen that British influence counted for nothing with the Court. Moore in fact did not hesitate to report that "his conduct had been marked with weakness, duplicity, and art," and that the chances of a successful campaign in Italy were hopeless unless a new line of policy were adopted. He recommended that the British Government should shake itself free from the Court of Naples, which was loathed equally in Sicily and Italy, and strive to gain the hearts of the people by honest and sufficient administration. He closed his letter by asking Castlereagh to send him Colonel Charles Stewart, the Minister's brother, with two regiments of the cavalry which were lying idle in England, and becoming rather "grooms in uniform than soldiers." Shortly afterwards he repaired to Palermo in person with the object of July 21. converting the Court, if possible, to better ways, and especially of obtaining the command of the Sicilian troops. He failed completely. It is true that the said troops did not number above four thousand, and, in Moore's words, "resembled the London Volunteers, with far less discipline and without their zeal and personal bravery." But this was not the worst. While at Palermo he received the news of Tilsit; and his experience of the Queen and of her Ministers confirmed his former opinion of their hostility to England. "If," he wrote, "we have to stand on the defensive, I say without hesitation that nothing short of taking possession of the Government and declaring the island English will give us security." "Bonaparte is now free to attack Sicily," he added a fortnight later, "and in the present state of things our situation is extremely precarious. But by taking over the Government of Sicily we could hold the island. The people would join us; and even the army would become efficient. This measure is specially necessary, whether the island is to be defended for their Sicilian Majesties or for Great Britain. If it be left to the King and

1807. Queen, they will lose themselves, the island and us." ¹

This was plain speaking, and it was the truth. It is difficult indeed to understand why the British Government allowed its subsidies to be wasted and its soldiers to be paralysed for so long by these utterly worthless Bourbons of Naples ; for nothing could be more certain than that ultimately either the British troops or the Neapolitan Queen must leave Sicily.

August. When Moore returned to Messina in August 1807, he found a very grave state of affairs awaiting him. The Ionian islands had been ceded to France under the Treaty of Tilsit, and five thousand French troops were already at Otranto, waiting to pass over to Corfu. With more timely warning of the public articles of the treaty, Fraser's detachment might have been earlier recalled from Egypt, and the French occupation of such points as Otranto might at any rate have been retarded. But now it was too late ; and there was nothing to be done but to strain every nerve to put Sicily into a good state of defence. To that object Moore at once devoted the whole of his energy. The three most important harbours on the eastern coast, Messina, Agosta, and Syracuse, were all in the hands of the British ; but there were very many places where a French force could land with little fear of molestation. The General therefore decided to select a central position in the interior, which he could make into a base of operations in the event of a French invasion, and from which he could descend upon them at any point. The town of Castro Giovanni—the Enna belauded of Cicero—was the place finally chosen, being situated upon an impregnable hill and amply supplied with water, while commanding, actually within range of cannon-shot, fertile country enough to feed a large garrison. To this stronghold Moore arranged that all his troops, except the garrisons of the principal ports on the coast, should retire ; and from such a place

¹ Moore to Sec. of State, 13th, 27th July, 10th Aug. 1807.

of arms such a commander might hope to defy the 1807. choicest troops of France.¹

Moore's anticipations of an attack were by no means ill-founded. On the 5th of September Napoleon Sept. 5. ordered a concentration of vessels at Toulon with a view to the transport of fifteen thousand men across the sea upon a secret expedition ; and ten days later Sept. 15. he directed a squadron of five ships of the line under Admiral Rosily to move from Cadiz upon the same port.² At the same time he urged strongly upon his brother Joseph the extreme necessity for capturing Reggio and Scilla without delay, reproaching him more than once with the disgrace that he incurred from suffering these two places to remain in British hands. Nor did the Emperor confine himself to reproaches, for he sent, or professed to send, Joseph a reinforcement of six thousand men.³ Fortunately, however, his attention was for some time distracted from Calabria and Sicily by the requirements of Corfu, which from the first he occupied with a garrison of five thousand men ; showing a degree of nervousness and apprehension as to its safety which reflects no little credit upon the British Navy. Evidently he had not forgotten Maida, and probably he was well informed as to the ability of Moore. But in September, as we have seen, Moore received orders to repair to Gibraltar with eight thousand men of the Sicilian garrison, as soon as Fraser's detachment should return from Egypt ; and this made the situation of Sicily island exceedingly serious. It is true that Moore did not sail until six weeks later, and that his movements Oct. 25. were kept strictly secret for as long as possible ; but this did not avert the eternal recurrence of danger from within the island itself. The Court of Palermo was, as usual, proposing ridiculous expeditions to Italy ; and Drummond, with amazing blindness, was supporting these proposals in the teeth of all the British officers,

¹ Bunbury, pp. 320-326.

² *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13,109, 13,156.

³ *Ibid.* 13,127, 13,182, 13,270.

1807. both naval and military, thus doing his utmost to forward the process of subjecting organised strength and understanding to imbecile but unscrupulous impotence. It could only be a question of time before information of the military weakness and internal dissensions of Sicily should reach the ears of Napoleon, who was not a man to let slip so promising an opportunity.

Fortunately, after the departure of Moore the command devolved upon Major-general Sherbrooke, an officer who had arrived in the Mediterranean from India in the previous year. He was equally lacking in education and genius ; and his temper was so hot that, had he not been warm-hearted, generous, and absolutely honest, his rough tongue and peremptory manners must early have brought him into trouble. He was, moreover, indefatigable, energetic, sparing neither himself nor others, and brave as a lion ; while, being incapable of a crooked action, he not only commanded the implicit confidence of his troops, but baffled all the wiles of the Court of Palermo with a success that would have been impossible to any subtler nature. Taking over the work of defence that had been initiated by Moore, he carried it forward with unremitting vigour, and by personal attention to the discipline of his regiments soon raised them to the highest order. This was well ; for on the 12th of December Napoleon learned of the withdrawal

Dec. 12. of Moore's detachment from Sicily, and gave orders for the Rochefort squadron and a large number of troops to be assembled at Toulon. By the third week of

1808. January 1808 his plans were matured. Eighteen Jan. thousand men were to be embarked, half of them at Baiae, a little to north of Naples, half of them at Scilla and Reggio ; they were to land in succession as near Messina as possible ; and when once Faro, at the extreme north-easterly point of Sicily, had been seized, the fate of the island was assured. " Sicily will not be taken when Palermo is captured," he wrote to Joseph, " but when Faro is occupied ; the communication is

everything. . . . The great point is that you should be 1808. master of Scilla and Messina, or at least of Faro. The English are not expecting this expedition; they will not for a month be able to face nine thousand men, and during this time you will reinforce them with nine thousand more . . . secrecy ! secrecy ! ”¹

The Emperor assumed that Reggio and Scilla were already in Joseph's hands ; and unfortunately his supposition was only a little premature. During December Reynier was moving cautiously southward; and on the 1st of January he invested the castle of Jan. 1. Scilla with five battalions and a detachment of cavalry. Sherbrooke, knowing that neither Scilla nor Reggio could be captured without heavy artillery, of which Reynier had none, was under no great apprehensions for either place. Reggio was in bad repair but could defy field-guns, even though it were held only by a weak brigade of Neapolitans. Scilla was far more formidable and more important. Perched high upon a peninsula of rock, with sheer cliffs to seaward, the castle barred the passage of boats along the coast and threatened all French batteries and posts along the shore of the strait. On the side of the land it was commanded by the rising slope of the mountains, while the town also gave shelter at a short distance to hostile sharp-shooters; but its own artillery swept both beach and town and a considerable space beyond. The castle was too strong to be damaged except by heavy guns, and the British engineers had cut steps out of the living rock down to the sea so that, except in stormy weather, communication with Faro was easy. The place was held by two hundred British,² aided by five hundred native levies or banditti in the town, and was commanded by an excellent soldier, Major Robertson of the Thirty-fifth.

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13,387, 13,480, 13,483.

² Detachments of the 27th, 58th, 62nd, and artillery. Bunbury says that there were four companies ; but the names of no other corps appear in the casualty-list.

1808. For an entire month Reynier lay before Scilla, making roads to bring up his guns, suffering some loss from the attacks of the garrison, and progressing little or not at all. Then treachery threw success into

Jan. 30. his hands. On the 30th of January the Neapolitan commander of the arsenal at Messina sent four gun-boats across the straits, nominally to cannonade the French troops on the shore, but in reality to desert with their heavy guns to the French. Sherbrooke, perceiving what was going forward, hastily ordered a brig of war to sail in pursuit of them. The brig standing close in shore engaged the French most gallantly, but was overpowered, and, having run aground, was burned to prevent her from falling into the enemy's hands. In this manner four twenty-four pounders were secured by the French ; and all the fruits of Maida were sacrificed by the perfidy of a colonel in an army which was reputed to be in alliance with us. "By God, sir," said Sherbrooke to him, "if you were under my command I would try you by a drum-head court-martial, and hang you within half an hour." But the mischief was done. Reynier without delay brought up his captured cannon before Reggio ; and the Neapolitan Governor surrendered immediately. Sherbrooke had made every preparation to cross the straits and attack the French in the night, at all risks, in order to recapture the heavy guns ; but for the second time a treacherous Neapolitan

Feb. 2. was too quick for him. On the 2nd of February Reynier occupied Reggio, and by the 6th he had brought up cannon from thence, besides those captured on the 30th of January, within breaching distance of Scilla. The native levies made several gallant skirmishing attacks, but were driven out of the town by superior numbers ;

Feb. 9. and on the 9th they evacuated the place and crossed the straits to Messina, without leaving a man in the hands of the enemy. Robertson and his little party

Feb. 17. held out till the 17th, when, all his guns having been dismounted and the exposed face of the castle being beaten into ruins, he retired down the stairway to the sea. He

was pressed by the French to the last, but held them 1808.
at bay, and, thanks to the admirable arrangements Feb. 17.
of the Navy, brought the whole of his garrison, except
such of the wounded as could not safely be moved,
unhurt into Messina. Of his two hundred men twelve
had been killed and thirty-one wounded. The loss
of the French must certainly have been appreciably
heavier.¹

Thus the first and most important step towards a French invasion of Sicily was gained, chiefly through treachery, but not a little through the mismanagement of the British Ministers. Fortunately the needs of Corfu prevented Napoleon from following up this success, or the consequences might have been most serious. It should seem indeed that Sicily during the last six months of 1807 was completely forgotten by Castlereagh, and was not seriously remembered until Moore's return to England. The Minister then consulted Moore, Sir Henry Fox, and Sir John Stuart, each independently of the other, as to the number of men necessary to hold the island. Fox and Moore gave in substance the same answer, to the effect that the question was as much political as military: if the Court of Palermo were permitted to continue its oppressive rule, then twenty-five thousand troops with a strong naval force were none too many; if the system of government were altered, then the garrison might be greatly reduced. Stuart on the other hand considered ten thousand men sufficient, which seems to have been the answer desired by Castlereagh; for he presently appointed Stuart to be Commander-in-chief in Sicily. The fact was that Ministers were much annoyed by Moore's exceedingly frank language respecting the Court of Palermo, and, incredible as it may seem, were determined to supersede their best General by their most specious charlatan. Stuart therefore was despatched with a draft of twelve hundred men and a reinforcement

¹ Bunbury, pp. 332-337; Sherbrooke to Sec. of State, 8th, 23rd Feb. 1808.

1808. of some five thousand more, most of them of the King's German Legion, but one and all foreigners in the British service.¹

Here, therefore, we are confronted with the singular fact that Moore's detachment was withdrawn from Sicily in October 1807 for service at Lisbon, and, upon arriving there too late, was not sent back to its original garrison but, with the exception of two battalions left at Gibraltar, was deliberately brought home. The result, as we have seen, was that Sicily was left in a state of dangerous weakness; that Reynier was able to establish himself firmly on the coast of the straits; and that, but for Napoleon's extreme anxiety over the victualling and strengthening of Corfu—a task which occupied all the energy of the Rochefort squadron—the island would almost certainly have been lost and the British garrison quite possibly captured. In March 1808, as has been told above, a reinforcement of foreign troops was at last sent to take the place of Moore's detachment, and, as shall now be shown, was designed to have reached the Mediterranean very much earlier. But none

¹ Castlereagh to Moore, 22nd Jan.; Stuart to Castlereagh, 25th Jan.; Moore to ditto, 26th Jan.; Fox to ditto, 27th Jan. 1808; Castlereagh to Stuart, 13th March 1808. (This last letter I have been unable to find, but an extract from it, with the date, is enclosed in Stuart to Amherst, 11th April 1810.)

Stuart's reinforcements:—

De Meuron's	.	.	.	.	.	167
Watteville's	.	.	.	.	.	824
3rd Line batt. K.G.L.	.	.	.	.	.	851
4th Line batt. K.G.L.	.	.	.	.	.	764
6th Line batt. K.G.L.	.	.	.	.	.	780
8th Line batt. K.G.L.	.	.	.	.	.	720
						4106
R.A.	.	.	.	.	.	336
Artillery K.G.L.	.	.	.	.	.	141
						4583 r. and f.
Drafts	.	.	.	.	.	1259
						5842

the less there remains for explanation the remarkable 1808. incident, that Ministers deliberately risked the loss of Sicily in order to recall British troops from thence to England, and to send in their place from England battalions of the King's German Legion. The investigation of these circumstances will lead us to some strange and unexpected conclusions.

Upon the receipt of the first despatches written by 1807. Strangford after his retirement from Lisbon to Sidney Dec. 4. Smith's flagship, Ministers ordered General Brent Spencer to embark immediately with a force of nearly eight thousand men of all ranks.¹ He was instructed to proceed to Sicily, but to touch at the Tagus on his way and to place himself under the orders of Moore, or if Moore were absent, to communicate with Strangford or Sidney Smith, or with both of them. If he were required to hold or to capture the forts of the Tagus during the embarkation of the Braganzas, he was to do so, provided that he could make sure of re-embarking in safety, in order that he might pursue his way ultimately to Sicily.

There was some delay in collecting the transports and even in assembling the troops, with the result that the expedition did not leave Portsmouth until the 20th of December, by which time the emigration of the Braganzas was known in England. Fresh instructions therefore were sent to Spencer to put in to the Tagus in case he should be required to act against the Russian fleet; to call next at Gibraltar and reinforce Dalrymple with two or three battalions, if requested; and finally to sail to Sicily. The armament was ordered to concentrate at Falmouth; but the convoy was dispersed by a storm, and on the 1st of January 1808 fewer than

¹ Embarkation return, 18th Dec. 1807:—

R.A.	148, all ranks.
Artillery K.G.L.	153 " "
1/29th	895
1/32nd	1048
1/50th	1084
1/82nd	1048
	K.G.L. 3rd batt. 950
	" 4th " 860
	" 6th " 880
	" 8th " 811

1808. half of the transports had reached that harbour. There was long delay in consequence ; and meanwhile events moved forward. News arrived that a second French army had invaded Spain, nominally to support Junot, but really—such was the report—to besiege Gibraltar and to occupy Ceuta. Castlereagh was exceedingly nervous as to the effects which might follow upon this last movement, for the capture of Ceuta by the French might lead to the domination of the entire coast of North Africa by France, and to the cessation of the supplies from Barbary, upon which the blockading squadrons before Cadiz and Lisbon depended for their subsistence. A large batch of drafts was therefore added to Spencer's detachment ; and fresh instructions authorised him to increase his force by two of the foreign battalions at Gibraltar, which would raise his strength to nearly ten thousand men, and with these to attempt

Jan. 30. Ceuta by surprise. Finally on the 30th of January yet other instructions were written to him to the effect that, if he succeeded in capturing Ceuta, he was to place his four British regiments in garrison there ; but that, if he failed, he was to leave the same four regiments at Gibraltar, with a sufficiency of copper-bottomed ships to embark them. The significance of the order lay in these last words ; for in those days coppered transports meant a voyage across the ocean.¹

Feb. 21. On the 21st of February Spencer sailed with sixty-four transports, but with little more than half of his force. The greater number of his troops had, in fact, been driven by the gale of December to Gibraltar, from whence Sir Hew Dalrymple, knowing the weakness of Sicily, had forwarded them to Messina. Arriving

Feb. 26. off the Tagus on the 26th and finding, of course, Junot in possession of Lisbon, Spencer proceeded to Gibraltar, where he arrived on the 10th of March. Very little enquiry soon satisfied him that any idea of

¹ Sec. of State to Spencer, 4th, 19th Dec. 1807, 16th, 30th, 31st Jan. 1808 ; Spencer to Sec. of State, 13th Dec. 1807, 1-16th Jan. 1808 (7 letters).

carrying Ceuta by a *coup de main* was absurd. For 1808. twelve months past the fortifications had been under- Mar. 10. going repair and new batteries had been under construction ; and an addition of two battalions to the garrison was daily expected. It was reported that Godoy had sent his treasure thither, in which case, as Spencer had observed to Castlereagh when the project against Ceuta was first mooted, it was hardly likely that the fortifications would have been neglected. Spencer therefore was able to despatch the foreign troops and drafts on to Messina, asking Sherbrooke in turn to send back to him such companies of his English battalions as had been sent thither by Dalrymple. Meanwhile he decided himself to await further orders at Gibraltar, where before long we shall see him again.¹

Thus it was that Sicily at last was made safe ; but it cannot be denied that the handling of the troops in the Mediterranean by the Government, during the winter of 1807 to 1808, was anything but felicitous. At the same time more than ordinary allowance must be made for the extreme difficulties of Ministers at this most critical period. They had inherited from their predecessors no fixed military policy but a series of sporadic expeditions, so meaningless and unprofitable that the best point about them was their failure. Moreover, the new Cabinet had no sooner taken office than they saw all Europe leagued against them, and themselves condemned to pay the extreme penalty for faults which they had not committed. And Napoleon was a terrible enemy. While maintaining the whole of the Grand Army to hold his recent conquests, he contrived to invade Portugal, to occupy Corfu in formidable strength, to take the offensive in Italy, and even to form the semblance of a camp at Boulogne. Staggered as he was by the British expedition to Copenhagen, he no sooner learned of it than he despatched his Minister of Marine to Boulogne, desiring him to inspect the flotilla and to give out that one hundred thousand men would

¹ Spencer to Sec. of State, 29th Feb., 18th March 1808.

1808. be assembled there in a fortnight. Nor was this wholly an empty threat, for a certain number of troops were actually, as we shall see, collected there; and even in March 1808, though his hands were then fuller than ever, Napoleon was still working out details for the concentration of troops and of flotillas at Boulogne, at Texel, and at Flushing.¹

In other quarters too he gave England no rest. Before committing himself deeply in Spain, he was determined to assure himself of the rest of Europe. Russia, as we have seen, had been easily brought to declare war upon England. But since this, at the outset of winter, signified little more than the rupture of commercial relations, he strove to keep Russia quiet and to ensure her interest in French successes in Spain by stimulating her to two diversions, the capture of Finland from Sweden, and a wild scheme for the invasion of India.² He constrained Austria, by a threatened occupation of Trieste, to sign a convention which guaranteed his safety for the time in that quarter; after which, with the usual mixture of menace and blandishment that characterised his diplomacy, he first hinted that it would be worth her while to join France and Russia in crushing England, and then ordered her, under pain of war, to demand the restoration of the Danish fleet and to dismiss the British Ambassador from Vienna. Metternich, who now ruled the destinies of Austria, complied. His policy was to wait and watch; and a few pledges more or less were of small importance to him. There remained Prussia, which Napoleon did his utmost to crush by cruel and pitiless exactions, thereby driving her to desperation, and strengthening the hands of the great reformers, Stein, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau, who had already begun the regeneration of their country. But meanwhile Frederick William, vainly striving to lighten the frightful burdens laid upon his people, was compelled to withdraw his ambassador from London and to close

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13,145, 13,158, 13,546, 13,579, 13,698, 13,708.

² *Ibid.* xvi. p. 498.

his ports to British shipping. Yet, with all these safe-^{1808.} guards, Napoleon distrusted Russia, and with super-human activity thought out schemes for alienating her permanently from Prussia, and for preventing her from injuring Turkey until, with the Sultan's help, he should have driven the British from the Mediterranean.

Even these matters did not exhaust the long list of the British Cabinet's anxieties. The Ministry of All the Talents had met the Berlin decrees by an Order in Council of the 7th of January 1807, declaring that neutral vessels trading between different ports of the French Empire should be lawful prize. This was no very severe measure of retaliation; but it was followed on the 11th of November by a second Order in Council, proclaiming France and all the continental states in alliance with her to be in a state of blockade, and all vessels trading to any of their ports to be lawful prize, unless they had cleared from a British port. Napoleon, when he first heard of this latter Order, was travelling in Italy, where, in addition to Etruria, already yielded to him under the Treaty of Fontainebleau, he was meditating the incorporation of the Papal States into his Empire, a change actually effected in February 1808. He retorted by the Milan decree of the 17th of November 1807, whereby he declared the British Isles to be in a state of blockade by land and sea, and adjudged all ships which had made a voyage to England, or had paid English custom-duties, or submitted to a visit from a British man-of-war, to be lawful prize. By this measure no doubt he hoped to drive Europe to despair and to combine the whole of it against England. In actual fact he only turned it against himself.

But these frantic regulations on both sides, of course, bore most hardly upon neutral powers; and of such powers the United States of America were beyond comparison at the time the most important. With the fullest right to resent the action of both parties, however, the President, Mr. Jefferson, chose to vent the indignation of his country upon one only. He

1808. met the first of the British Orders in Council by a violent denunciation in a message to Congress, wholly ignoring the Berlin Decree which had provoked it. This, to begin with, did not promote good feeling between the two Anglo-Saxon nations. Matters were not improved by the outrageous conduct of a captain of the British Navy, who in June 1807 forcibly arrested an American frigate, which was cruising off Virginia, searched her for deserters from the British fleet, and actually carried away the culprits to Halifax. Upon this the President ordered all British ships of war to quit the ports of the Union; and, though the British Government disowned the act, recalled the erring captain, and offered to make reparation, the incident naturally caused much indignation in America. Then came the second Order in Council; whereupon President Jefferson laid an embargo upon all vessels in American harbours, and followed this up, in March 1808, by absolute prohibition of all commercial transactions with either of the belligerent powers. This, though inflicting severe loss upon both England and the United States, made little difference to France, whose trade with America was trifling. The irritation on both sides was increased; and the British Ministers, over and above all other troubles, found themselves confronted with the prospect of war with the United States. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that their councils should have been distracted and their general conduct of affairs, apart from the isolated action towards Denmark and Portugal, unformed and irresolute.

At one time, indeed, they seemed likely to fall back on a policy of despair. This was nothing less than an idea of abandoning further efforts in Europe, and, to use Canning's phrase, which was in all likelihood conceived at this time, of calling in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. A very powerful advocate of this policy was the veteran intriguer Dumouriez, who seized the opportunity, afforded by the chance of hostilities with America, to put forward

one of those gigantic schemes whereby he sought at 1808. once to place himself on a level with Napoleon and to forward his own private ends. Its purport and the reasoning upon which it was based were briefly as follows. War with the United States made it of extreme importance that Great Britain should seize the intermediate stations used by vessels trading across the Atlantic, namely Madeira, the Azores, the Cape de Verde Islands, and the Canary Islands. For this nine thousand men would suffice. Next the alliance of Britain with the house of Braganza in its new home in Brazil must be made closer than ever, in order to protect the colony against the joint attacks of Spain, from Peru and Buenos Ayres on the west and south, and of France from Guiana on the north. Guiana must therefore be taken from the French by force; but no further military expeditions should be contrived against the Spanish colonies either in Central or South America, for it would be better to encourage these colonies, by negotiation and by the support of British fleets, to proclaim their independence under a new sovereign. Such a sovereign Dumouriez undertook himself to supply in the person of Louis Philippe of Orleans. Mexico must be treated in the same fashion; and Mexico should be the point selected for the first introduction of their future King to the Spanish Americans. The new Sovereign ought, therefore, to be escorted thither by a force of twenty-five thousand British soldiers, which could march with all speed upon Vera Cruz and accomplish the desired revolution by force, if necessary. When his authority was established, the British could evacuate the country; and King Louis Philippe would then send a part of his own army to New Mexico to hold the Americans in check in the Southern States.¹

It seems almost incredible at this distance of time that the British Ministers should have given serious consideration to so wild a design; yet beyond all

¹ *Castlereagh Desp.* vii. 345-371.

1808. doubt they did so ; and the mere fact is sufficient to show how desperate the situation in Europe must have appeared to them. Louis Philippe himself of course seconded Dumouriez's proposals and declared his readiness to take his part as principal actor ; and the indefatigable Dumouriez, finding some members of the Cabinet inclined to listen to him, followed up his first memorandum by others not less eloquent and suasive. In the first fortnight of 1808 another adventurer appeared upon the scene in the person of Miranda, who came furnished with credentials by Mr. Cochrane Johnstone, which of themselves should have sufficed to close every door in Downing Street against him. But it was not so. Though Dumouriez had held the man up as a rogue whose treason had lost him the battle of Neerwinden, and as a paid agent of the United States, yet Miranda was received, consulted, and even placed in communication with Sir Arthur Wellesley. By February 1808 Sir Arthur had sketched out several plans of campaign. Even so late as in June he was furnishing memoranda for expeditions to Caracas and La Plata ; while Castlereagh on his side was busily calculating the number of troops that could be spared for these enterprises or, possibly, for a descent upon Mexico.¹

Very soon it will be shown how, in consequence of unexpected events, Arthur Wellesley recommended the despatch of troops to the Old rather than the New Spain. Meanwhile it is manifest that the Cabinet was really inclined to stake the fate of England upon a series of campaigns in the New World. It was with this object that Spencer was instructed to retain coppered transports for his four British battalions, and that Sicily was imperilled for months by the clumsy exchange of foreign troops, who were engaged to serve in Europe only, for British battalions which could be sent to any

¹ See for the whole of this subject *Castlereagh Desp.* vii. 257-442, and in particular Castlereagh's memorandum, undated but from internal evidence written in June 1808, pp. 385-390. *Wellington Suppl. Desp.* vi. 61-73.

part of the earth. Ministers were too sensible to 1808. espouse the cause of Louis Philippe, or to accept the extravagant eulogy with which Dumouriez adorned the character and abilities of that extremely untrustworthy Prince ; yet, as it seems to me, but for Dumouriez's memorandum, they would have been less ready to waste two battalions upon the occupation of Madeira. On the return of Miranda they appear to have transferred their confidence to him ; nor can it be said that this was a change for the better, for he was a most dangerous man. Few things are more difficult for the historical student to understand than the influence which such plausible impostors as Miranda and Charmillot contrived to exert over successive Ministries, composed one and all of capable men.

And yet, though one may shudder to contemplate even the possibility that the destinies of England after Tilsit might have been committed to Miranda, it would be unjust to condemn the men who listened to him. It needs no great gift of insight to pronounce that the policy of abandoning Europe for South America would have been utterly fatal to England ; and it is easy to point out that, through preoccupation with such matters, Ministers were guilty of a grave blunder, involving serious consequences, in the Mediterranean. But it is not so easy to imagine the appalling burden of difficulty and discouragement which was piled upon the Cabinet by the succession of disasters that fell upon England in 1807. Yet Ministers never lost heart nor energy ; if they made mistakes, they gained at least two telling successes ; and we must needs honour the men who carried the country through so perilous a time by sheer courage and stubborn resolution to fight to the end.

CHAPTER XVII

1808. THE new subsidiary treaty between Sweden and Great Britain was signed, as we have seen, on the 8th of February 1808. A few days later the first instalment of the subsidy was paid, and a British squadron entered the Cattegat ; so that King Gustavus lacked neither means nor encouragement to push forward his preparations for defence. Nor had his enemies shown any great alacrity to attack him. Alexander, though he had declared war upon England as a matter of form, was not eager to bring about an active rupture by invasion of her ally's territory ; and he hesitated also to occupy Finland lest Napoleon should set this acquisition against Russia's share in the partition of Turkey. Napoleon upon his side informed the Tsar that Bernadotte with twenty thousand French and ten thousand Danes was ready to invade Sweden from the south, while the Russian army approached Stockholm from the north ; but he had no intention of allowing his troops to act until Russia should have really committed herself to operations in Finland.¹ None the less King Gustavus appears early to have given up Finland for lost ; and, counting Feb. 26. upon the certainty of a war with Denmark, he begged for a British force to enable him to indemnify himself by the invasion of Zealand and of Norway. Mr. Thornton, our Minister at Stockholm, strongly supported the proposal, dwelling upon the point that it was to the interest of Britain, as well as of Sweden, that Denmark

¹ Vandal, *Napoléon et Alexandre*, i. 274, 314 ; *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13,592, 13,614.

should not, by an invasion of Scania, become mistress 1808. of both shores of the Sound. He had little doubt that the King of Sweden would gladly place ten or fifteen thousand of his men under British command to act with twice as many British troops against Zealand, while Gustavus himself, with the rest of his army, devoted his attention to Norway and Finland.

At the beginning of March news reached Stockholm that the Russians had actually invaded Finland on the 21st of February, had taken Lovisa, and were moving Feb. 21. along the southern coast upon Helsingfors.¹ The King answered by a formal declaration of war, and ordered troops to the frontier of Norway and to Scania; but no effort was made to call the people to arms; and in Finland itself, where the spirit of the peasantry was excellent, the Swedish forces were compelled to fall back before superior numbers because there were no weapons for the country people. On the 15th of March a note Mar. 15. containing a formal declaration of war by Denmark was handed to King Gustavus; and at the same time intelligence reached him that Bernadotte with ten thousand French and some thirteen thousand Spaniards of Romana's corps had entered Holstein. Gustavus, having by this time approved a plan for the invasion of Norway, begged for a British diversion upon that side, or at any rate for the insertion of reports in the English newspapers that a British descent upon Norway was in contemplation. But meanwhile the advance of the Russians in Finland continued, and all classes in Sweden looked with indescribable anxiety and impatience for the arrival of a British army. The demoralisation caused by the inefficient rule of Gustavus had risen to such a height that the Swedish nation, as brave a folk as is to be found in Europe, felt powerless to defend itself.²

Owing to a long period of contrary winds not a mail reached Stockholm from England between the 23rd of

¹ Thornton to Sec. of State, 26th Feb. 1808.

² Thornton to Sec. of State, 3rd, 4th, 8th, 15th, 21st March 1808.

1808. February and the 8th of April. At last, however, a despatch from Canning came to Thornton's hands, announcing that a squadron of five sail of the line with six smaller vessels was ready to sail to Sweden with the first fair wind, making, with the ships already at Gottenburg, a fleet of eight sail of the line and eleven smaller craft. Ministers were also ready to furnish five and thirty thousand muskets, with proportionate ammunition ; but they declined to send troops to Scania or to Norway without previous concert of operations and agreement as to the object of the campaign. Meanwhile the Swedish Minister in London, Count Adlerberg, flooded the Cabinet with vague petitions for money and for arms, having not the slightest knowledge of the purpose to which they were to be turned ; and the Swedish military operations pursued an uneven and

April 15. unprofitable course. On the 15th of April General Armfeldt invaded Norway and gained a trifling success or two ; but, as the country was in a state of famine, it was not easy to see what was to be gained by saddling Sweden with the maintenance of several hundred thousand starving inhabitants. In Finland the Swedes retired steadily and in good order before the Russians, knowing that while the fortress of Sveaborg, with the flotilla sheltered by its cannon, was safe, the enemy could have little hold over the country. The retreat had been successfully conducted as far as Uleaborg, and all seemed to be going well, when, on the 3rd of

May 3. May, King Gustavus was staggered by a message reporting that Sveaborg had been treacherously delivered up to the Russians on that very day, and that Finland was practically lost.¹

Most unfortunately the British Government had already committed itself to action before intelligence of this disaster reached England. Weary of the importunity of Count Adlerberg, Ministers on the 17th of April decided to despatch at once ten thousand men

¹ Thornton to Sec. of State, 15th, 19th, 26th, 28th April. 5th May 1808.

to Sweden, relying on the envoy's assurance that this 1808. force would be cordially received at Gottenburg. They declared it impossible to send more than ten thousand men, and even so reserved the right to withdraw the whole or any part of them at any time; but, for the sake of their ally, they were ready to send them without any previous agreement as to the service upon which they should be employed. However, the Quartermaster-general of the force, Colonel Murray, was to start in advance of the rest to concert operations against their arrival.

Sir John Moore was appointed to command this little army;¹ and his instructions were by no means simple of execution. These explained that his force, small though it was, could give effectual assistance to Sweden, because it could be carried rapidly to any point on the coast to act in conjunction with the fleet. For this reason, as also for the sake of remaining in close touch with the King's ships and of burdening Sweden as little as possible in the matter of supplies, its operations were to be confined to the coast as far as might be. In fact Moore's troops were not to be drawn into the interior nor incorporated with the mass of the Swedish army, and they were to remain exclusively under the command of their own officers; but nevertheless they might act in co-operation with a Swedish corps, and, so far as possible, were to defer to the wishes and suggestions of the King of Sweden. Subject to these limitations, the operations were left to Moore's discretion, and it was free to him to determine whether he could best

¹ *British troops*: 1/4th, 1/28th, 1/52nd, 1/79th, 1/92nd, 3 cos. 95th.
German troops: K.G.L., 3rd L.D., 1st and 2nd batts. L.I., 1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th Line batts.

<i>Total</i> : Germans (including 1/52nd) . . .	6,631	rank and file.
British (excluding ") . . .	4,233	" "
	10,864	
Add $\frac{1}{8}$ for officers and sergeants . . .	1,358	
	12,222	
<i>Say</i> 12,000 of all ranks . . .		<u>12,222</u>

1808. contribute to the security of Sweden by taking up a defensive position at Gottenburg or elsewhere, or by an offensive movement towards Norway. This latter, it should be mentioned, was the plan favoured by King Gustavus, though Moore's instructions hinted that the British Government preferred the former course. A supplementary letter of later date added that, according to the latest reports, the King of Sweden inclined towards an attack upon Zealand, and that Ministers were ready to entertain this project on two conditions; first, that England must not be counted upon to give help in holding the island, if captured; and, secondly, that the plan of operations must be submitted first of all to them, unless the delay thereby caused were likely to imperil the success of the enterprise.¹

No other sphere of operations was named in the instructions; and, after a conversation with Castlereagh upon the whole matter, Moore in his journal recorded his opinion that the Government had no specific plan beyond sending ten thousand men to Gottenburg, to be ready to act if occasion offered. The expedition in fact was conceived in the spirit of Henry Dundas, and the instructions were of the old description. "Take ten thousand men to Sweden and do something. We do not know what you can do, nor have we any reason for giving you ten thousand instead of thirty thousand men, except that we are not disposed to risk the loss of more." The armament assembled at

May. Yarmouth in the first week of May, when Moore at once took exception to the number of ships employed. "We shall be over two hundred sail," he wrote, "though all the troops might be carried in twenty, if troop-ships were employed, or larger ships hired. The convoy would be more manageable, not only from being smaller, but from having officers on board who understand signals. Some such plan must be adopted if we are to carry on a maritime war on the enemy's coasts." Castlereagh was not accustomed to criticism of this

¹ Sec. of State to Moore, 20th April, 1st May 1808.

kind, and was the more hurt by it inasmuch as he had 1808. been Moore's champion in the Cabinet. He wrote a curt answer, declaring that he did not agree in thinking vessels of large burden more suitable than those of light draught for operations in the Baltic; and he ended by adding up the total of transports and showing it to be one hundred and fifty-eight,¹ which, though a large number, was not, as he averred, nearly so large as that which had sailed to join Cathcart in 1807. None the less it seems that the transports exceeded two hundred; and it is obvious that, even if the organisation of the Baltic expedition of 1807 were good, which is by no means self-evident, such a precedent was inapplicable to so roving a commission as that entrusted to Moore. Lastly, it is quite certain that for Castlereagh to instruct Moore as to the right methods of composing a military armament for maritime operations, was both presumptuous and impertinent. It is a pity that Castlereagh, who was a great as well as an able man, should not have perceived this; for Moore, who was fully as able as himself, perhaps not less great, and unfortunately a great deal more critical, was not the man to overlook it.²

On the 10th of May the convoy sailed under escort May 10. of eleven ships of the line and several smaller craft, commanded by Vice-admiral Sir James Saumarez, and after a fine passage, prolonged for three days by fogs, anchored ten miles from Gottenburg on the 17th. May 17. Here Moore received a report from Murray which was singularly discouraging. In the first place the King flatly refused permission for the British to land in Sweden. This would perhaps have been a small matter if the troops could at once have been employed elsewhere; but from all quarters the news was bad. In Norway eight thousand Swedes under General Armfeldt were opposed

¹ 88 troop-ships, 43 horse-ships, 27 store-ships = 158 sail.

² Moore to Sec. of State, 6th May (private); Sec. of State to Moore, 9th May 1808; James's *Naval History*, v. 13; Moore's *Journal*, ii. 204-205.

1808. to twenty-nine thousand Norwegians and Danes ; their leader had rashly advanced to a dangerous position, and was crying out for the British to extricate him. In Finland ten thousand Swedes were steadily retreating before superior numbers of the Russians, and Sveaborg had been lost by treachery, which could not have been confined to the commandant alone. The entire Swedish army consisted of twenty-nine thousand men, of whom eighteen thousand were in Norway and Finland, as above stated, five thousand were in Southern Sweden, two thousand had been detached to recover from the Russians the island of Gothland, and the remainder were in Stockholm. There was talk also of nine thousand men in the dépôts, all of them raw levies, and of thirty thousand men of a *levée en masse*, whereof the officers and non-commissioned officers had indeed been appointed, but the men had not yet been found. Yet the King ardently advocated attack either on Zealand, which was defended by twenty-eight thousand Danes, to say nothing of forty-four thousand French, Spaniards, and Dutch under Bernadotte in Holstein and the Island of Funen ; or upon Norway, where the British could only land upon the west coast, and would be liable to be overwhelmed by the full force of the enemy before they could join Armfeldt. Moore pointed the moral of these facts as set forth by Murray, and warned Castle-reagh against unrealisable expectations. " Unless," he added, " the Swedes make greater efforts for their own defence, I doubt whether my troops, limited as they are to operations on the coast, can either render them essential service or protract their fall for any appreciable time."¹

May 21. On the 21st Murray joined Moore from Stockholm, bearing a letter from King Gustavus to the General. " Before we discuss the employment of your troops," wrote the monarch in effect, " I wish to be clear as to

¹ Moore to Sec. of State, 19th May ; to Charles Stewart (private), 19th May ; Murray to Sec. of State, 8th May and (private) 13th May 1808.

the conditions under which your Court has sent them 1808. here. King George reserves to himself the right to withdraw his troops at any moment. I think that I am entitled to ask for a week's or a fortnight's notice of such withdrawal, and to claim likewise the right, upon the same notice, to withdraw my own troops or direct the British to re-embark. Again, you have orders to use your force as far as possible as a separate corps, and to preserve communication with the fleet. I accept the principle of this order, but it is difficult to establish it regularly at the outset of combined operations. Have your naval commanders orders to subordinate their movements to yours ? I hope that the communication between fleet and army can be adjusted so as not to hamper operations ashore. Lastly, you have orders to pay all possible deference to my wishes, but to keep your force exclusively under your sole and immediate command. I pass over the contradictory nature of these directions, but I observe that the entry of an auxiliary force into a foreign country presumes necessarily that the supreme command will be with the Governor of that country. Upon this I must insist, though in matters of detail I leave your troops to the command of their own officers. I cannot doubt but that these modifications will be reconcilable with your instructions, and I await your reply to that effect."

Moore was taken aback. The King's requests were manifestly fair and reasonable, yet they were in such contrast to his instructions that he could only refer them to Downing Street. The state of affairs was so different from that which he had been led to expect, that he sent Murray home to explain it at length, adding his deliberate opinion that, notwithstanding the difficulty of such a course of action, it would be best to recall his force at once, since it could do no useful work in Sweden.¹

Murray reached London on the 29th of May, May 29. where his arrival was not particularly welcome to

¹ Moore to Sec. of State, 21st May 1808; Moore's *Journal*, ii. 207-210.

1808. Ministers. They would have preferred Moore to act upon his own responsibility, or in other words to supply them with intentions which they were unable to evolve for themselves. The staff at the Horse Guards condoled with the General on this circumstance, which after all was characteristic of every Ministry that they had ever known, and adjured him to make the best of his position. Castlereagh, honestly anxious to extract some good out of a hopeless business, practically conceded the whole of the requests of King Gustavus, except the most important of all, as to which his directions were curiously mixed. Moore was to consider himself as under the command of King Gustavus so long as he was within the bounds of the Swedish dominions, but subject still to the limitations imposed by his original instructions, the purport of which would be communicated to the King by Thornton ; but Moore was further authorised at his discretion to refuse to obey his Swedish Majesty's orders until he had referred them to Downing Street, and even to withdraw the troops upon his own responsibility after giving the necessary notice. That, under such conditions, any operations, to say nothing of successful operations, could be carried on in concert with the Swedish troops at all, is an idea which would be scouted by any corporal in the armies of Europe ; and yet Castlereagh, while gravely setting forth this grotesque notion to Moore, proceeded to discuss the warlike schemes of King Gustavus at great length. Ministers distinctly forbade the British force to participate in any expedition to Zealand, but, while deprecating the invasion of Norway, directed Moore to co-operate with the Swedish troops so far as might be consistent with the safety of his own army. Well might the Military Secretary write to Moore, with much sympathy, "that his new instructions left him just where he was before."¹

It is not easy to excuse Ministers in this matter. They evidently wished to recall their troops from

¹ Sec. of State to Moore, 2nd June 1808 (four letters).

Sweden ; and there was the less reason for their endeavour to throw the responsibility for this step upon the General, since the King of Sweden had given them an excellent pretext for doing so. In spite of Adlerberg's repeated assurances that the British force would be welcomed at Gottenburg, King Gustavus had refused them permission to land. In his letters to Moore Castlereagh expressed surprise and dissatisfaction at this unexpected proceeding ; and the Cabinet also instructed the Minister at Stockholm to inform the King that, unless unreserved facilities were at once given for the landing and accommodation of the troops, they were to return immediately to England. But this was not enough. Events in Spain had, as shall presently be related, taken such a turn as to demand the speedy presence of a British army in Portugal ; and it needed only a little firmness to announce to King Gustavus that, since he found the arrival of Moore's force in Sweden unpalatable, the British Government hastened with many apologies to relieve him of its presence.

Meanwhile the British troops remained on board their transports ; and Moore occupied himself in probing the rottenness of King Gustavus's government to the bottom. All was confusion and impotence ; the ablest men in Sweden were divided by contrary opinions and sympathies ; all hearts had been alienated from England by the simple fact that the King, whose incredible maladministration had brought ruin to his country, embraced her friendship ; no profit could be expected for the common cause of Europe from Sweden, and the first serious crisis would bring down the monarchy with a crash. "To defend this country," wrote Moore privately to Castlereagh's brother, Charles Stewart, "Great Britain must take the whole burden upon herself. Short of this she may cripple her own army and waste her own resources, but she cannot save Sweden beyond this season."¹

¹ Moore to Sec. of State and to Charles Stewart, 27th May 1808.

1808. By the 11th of June Murray had returned to Moore with the new instructions from England; and the General wrote loyally that he would submit to any difficulty to which the Government thought right to

June 12. expose him, and would do his best. On the next June 17. day he set out for Stockholm, and on the 17th was received in audience by Gustavus, to whom he imparted the purport of his instructions. The King at once took exception to them. He understood, he said, that the British troops were given to him for offensive operations, and yet they were forbidden to share in an expedition to Zealand. How could it be said that they were placed under his command, when he was not allowed to direct them to the services which he considered to be most important? Moore argued as best he could, but to no purpose. The unfortunate monarch met all military difficulties by asserting the strength of an imaginary army and the completeness of imaginary preparations; and, when the General pressed his contentions home, the King merely repeated his previous statements and dogmas, iteration of phrases being his one idea of refuting an argument. Operations in Zealand being impossible, the King next considered the chance of a campaign in Norway, and having rejected that in turn, broached the subject of employing the British in Finland. This was an awkward question, which Moore endeavoured to parry by remarking that his troops had not yet received permission to land, and that, if His Majesty intended to persist in refusing such permission, he would do well to say so at once, in order that they might return to England. "I cannot consent to your landing in Sweden," answered the King. "I never asked for troops to be sent to Sweden, and I do not know how my Minister in London was led to do so. I applied for a corps of troops to act on the coast of Norway, and I was surprised to hear of your arrival at Gottenburg." Then, returning to the subject of Finland, he asked Moore flatly if he were instructed to object to the employment

of his corps in an expedition to that quarter or not. 1808. Moore replied that, until the nature of the service was disclosed to him, he could not say whether he should agree to it or reject it. "I am not satisfied with your answer," returned His Majesty. "I do not see how I can hold the supreme command unless I am implicitly obeyed."

The logic even of this poor madman was too strong for the halting instructions of the British Ministers. After proposing a wild scheme, not only for recapturing Swedish Finland but for annexing Russian Finland to it, Gustavus dismissed Moore for that day, and on the morrow produced a chart of the Gulf of Finland and a plan of operations. From this it appeared that his design was to drive the Russians back with a large force of imaginary troops, and that the British should land at three points high up the Gulf of Finland and cut off the enemy from St. Petersburg. To shorten vain discussion, Moore asked leave to take the plan away and talk it over with General Tibell, the Swedish Quartermaster-general. He duly did so; and on the following day Tibell went through the business with a grave face which should have gained him high repute as a diplomatist. "From what I have seen of the King of Sweden," wrote Moore when making his report on the proposed plan, "I should feel that I was a bad servant to my country and very unworthy of my trust, were I to place any part of my corps at his disposal. Nothing short of a positive order shall induce me to do it."¹

On the 20th, Moore, in a third conference with the King, stated definitely that he would have nothing to do with the operations in Finland. "Then why were you sent here?" asked the poor lunatic. "I never wanted troops except for offensive operations. Your corps is not wanted in Sweden. I have more troops than enough; and I will never consent to your landing." And then followed a long string of assertions already

¹ Moore to Sec. of State, 17th, 19th June 1808.

1808. made in the previous conferences, that Adlerberg had never undertaken that the British should be welcome at Gottenburg, that he had received no orders to do so, and therefore it was impossible that he could have done so. Finally, however, Gustavus asked Moore whether he would employ his troops in Norway, breezily waving aside Moore's objection, that he himself in his own royal person had but three days before advanced conclusive reasons against any operations in that country. The interview closed, as had the last, by a promise on Moore's part to discuss the proposed plan with Tibell. That officer, as before, went through the solemn farce of treating nonsense seriously, until Moore hinted that the play had gone far enough and that it was time to change the subject. "With all my heart," answered Tibell; "we have done all due honour to the plan"; and, passing rapidly to other topics, he made himself exceedingly agreeable to his guests.¹

Upon this Moore decided that he must take his troops back to England. After consultation with Mr. Thornton, therefore, he wrote the Agent a letter to say that, since the King declined to allow his men to land, he must withdraw them, pursuant to his instructions, and must ask for a last audience to take leave of His Majesty. He was admitted accordingly on

June 23. the 23rd of June, in company with Murray; the King being attended by Tibell and by other officers, naval and military. The interview began unpleasantly by the King's remarking that he wished witnesses to be present to prevent misrepresentation of what passed in these conferences; and, very soon, owing to his repeated insinuations of ill faith against both Thornton and Moore, the atmosphere became stormy. The monarch entangled himself in a tissue of contradictory statements, repeated them all time after time with pitiful iteration; and, warming to his work, he presently accused Moore of direct falsehood, and

¹ Moore to Sec. of State, 23rd June 1808; *Moore's Journal*, vol. ii. pp. 220-224.

threatened to report the matter to King George. Then 1808.
the General unfortunately lost patience, and, after an in- June 23.
dignant outburst in vindication of himself, endeavoured to close the conference. But the King would not let him go. Kings have the advantage of choosing their own time to end a conversation, and Gustavus, being this day in a high state of imbecility, refused to forgo it. He went over all the ground again for the tenth time, accusing Moore of obstructing the fulfilment of King George's intentions and of thwarting his own royal plans ; until at last the General, weary of the eternal story, said that he would take upon himself to detain his troops at Gottenburg until he should receive orders from England to withdraw them. Therewith the conference ended. It was, in Moore's own words, one of the most painful interviews that he had ever had in his life ; and fortunately it proved to be the last which he was to hold with King Gustavus.¹

On the same night Moore felt misgivings lest the offer, which he had made, to keep his troops at Gottenburg were contrary to his instructions ; and on the next day he wrote officially to Thornton that he had June 24.
exceeded his powers, could not fulfil his offer, and should take the troops home. Thornton duly forwarded this letter to the Court ; and during that night between eleven and twelve o'clock one of the King's suite called upon Moore, and left an order from his master that the General should not quit Stockholm without the royal permission. Moore interpreted this to mean that he was arrested ; and the language used to Murray by the King in an interview on the same day left no doubt about the fact. Gustavus indeed chose to consider that Moore had insulted him by making an offer and afterwards retracting it. No protests either from Murray or from Thornton having the slightest effect upon the incensed monarch, Moore wrote orders for General Hope, his second-in-command, to take the troops home, in case he himself should be detained.

¹ Moore to Sec. of State, 23rd June 1808.

1808. Murray had two more conferences with the King, but June 27. failed to procure Moore's liberation ; and on the 27th it was decided that it would be best for the General quietly to make his escape. This he did with little June 29. difficulty ; and on the evening of the 29th he presented himself, disguised as a peasant, on the quarter-deck of Sir James Saumarez's flagship, the *Victory*, in the middle of a ball given by the officers to the ladies of Gottenburg.¹ Murray joined him on the 30th, and was at once sent forward to England to report what had passed ; and on the 3rd of July the entire force sailed for England, July 15. anchoring safely twelve days later in the Downs.²

Meanwhile, on the 30th of June, Castlereagh, on receipt of Moore's first letters from Stockholm, had written him orders to " withdraw the troops in the most respectful manner, doing nothing to disturb the harmony between the two Courts." The General therefore had only anticipated the wishes of Ministers in acting as he did ; but still his conduct had not pleased them. The gossip of Stockholm represented him as having behaved with unnecessary arrogance and haughtiness ; and Canning readily believed it. Yet it is not difficult to imagine what would have been the tone of Canning's own language if he had been sent, as Moore was, to discuss the fate of ten thousand British troops with a madman. Moore's friends, on the other hand, considered the Swedish expedition to be simply a trick, designed by Ministers to get rid of the General. This conclusion seems to me absurd. Castlereagh was incapable of such petty dexterity, and though the same cannot be said of Canning, it is hardly credible that at such a time the Cabinet would have allowed so large a force to be paralysed for a purpose which could more easily and cheaply have been fulfilled in some other way. There is, I think, little doubt but that the expedition was sent out from England in the best of good faith, even if with the worst of bad judgment. The only explana-

¹ *Passages in the Early Military Life of Sir George Napier*, p. 41.

² Moore to Sec. of State, 26th, 30th June, 15th July 1808.

tion of the conduct of Ministers is that Canning had 1808. never read the despatches of Pierrepont and of the other Envoys at the Court of Gustavus ; but this, so far from being an excuse, entitles the Cabinet rather to the greater damnation. As regards the King himself, it is idle to condemn a lunatic, but there was a good deal of vice about his madness. He was perfectly aware, before the arrival of Moore's troops, of the conditions upon which they had been despatched, and entertained no idea of refusing them permission to land until Murray came to Stockholm.¹ Upon the whole the behaviour of Ministers admits of no defence ; and Moore, being perfectly aware of the fact, was the more indignant that he should have been sent out on so futile a mission. He did not live long enough to forgive his employers, and they on their side never forgave him ; for men pardon none so unreadily as him whom they have chosen to be an agent of their folly. The worst result, therefore, of the Swedish expedition was that it set Ministers quarrelling with their ablest General.

Meanwhile the reinforcement of the Sicilian garrison and the despatch of Stuart to the Mediterranean constituted the one serious military effort of the British Government over and above the Swedish expedition. The substitution of Stuart for Sherbrooke was not in itself considered an advantage by the troops in Sicily ; and the new General himself was fain to acknowledge that his predecessor's firmness had wrought a happy change in the disposition of the Court of Palermo. There was, however, another reason for the chastened demeanour of Ferdinand and his Queen. Since their last unsuccessful expedition to Italy they could no longer be said to possess a regular army, and, though they were trying to raise a force of volunteers, they had so far met with little success. Such was the first report which Stuart made upon his arrival in Messina at the end of April ; but in May the general insurrection in Spain, of which account shall shortly be

¹ Thornton to Sec. of State, 23rd June 1808.

1808. given, renewed the hopes of every crowned head in Europe. Drummond, still the tool of Queen Caroline, wrote home glowing accounts of the general ripeness of the Neapolitan population for revolt; and Castlereagh at once instructed Stuart to countenance any such movement, thinking that the report was the more likely to be true now that Spain had set an example. Stuart, however, was not so foolish as to be deceived by Drummond's intelligence, and resolutely declined to have anything to say to the matter. Their Sicilian Majesties therefore sent an ill-equipped expedition to reduce Ischia, which of course it failed to do; and then suddenly, at the end of July, they turned their energies into another channel. The King and heir-apparent of Spain were both of them under durance in France; and it occurred to Caroline that one of her sons might become Regent of the kingless nation. The young man was accordingly sent off, and Louis Philippe of Orleans, balked of his empire in New Spain, accompanied him. Steadily all the military interest in Southern Europe concentrated itself in Spain, and the importance of Sicily waned. Castlereagh, indeed, was disposed to order Stuart himself, with every man that he could spare, to the Peninsula. This was not at all to the General's taste, for he loved to be Commander-in-chief, and he therefore hastily began to equip transports and to make preparations for another descent upon Italy.¹

Among other of his dispositions Stuart reinforced Hudson Lowe at Capri with a very poor regiment of Maltese, which was not in the circumstances a wise thing to do. For, among the changes brought about by Napoleon's Spanish designs, Joseph Bonaparte had been removed from Naples to Madrid; and in September Murat, whose achievements in Spain shall shortly be recounted, had been brought back from that country to be enthroned in Joseph's stead.

¹ Stuart to Sec. of State, 7th, 27th April, 25th May, 14th, 26th July, 26th Aug.; Sec. of State to Stuart, 28th June 1808; Bunbury, pp. 338-342.

This was the moment chosen by King Ferdinand 1808. and Queen Caroline to press again upon the British General their anxiety to be restored to their beloved Naples. So sanguine were they, that Ferdinand formally declared his willingness to place his own troops—reckoned at ten thousand raw levies—under the British General's command. The news from Portugal was good ; Sir Arthur Wellesley had been winning victories ; now was the time for Stuart to show himself as good a man as Wellesley. But Sir John was wisely cautious. The season had been terribly sickly in Sicily; nearly three thousand men were in hospital ; and barely eight thousand could be spared for an offensive movement. Moreover, the whole tone of the force had deteriorated under Stuart's command. Led by such men as Moore and Sherbrooke its spirit had been admirable; but the new General was an impostor, with a false reputation derived from an action which his brigadiers had won for him; and his army was of course perfectly aware of the fact. The best of the officers sought employment elsewhere, and those that remained, instead of attending to their duty, spent their time in grumbling and scornful criticism of their commander. Stuart, therefore, while accepting the command of the Sicilian troops as a graceful compliment, declined to commit himself to serious operations ; too careful of his spurious fame to run any risks of failure, and too jealous to be willing to work under a more able chief. Officers of this type are never wanting in the British, nor probably in any, army.¹

Then suddenly there fell upon him a humiliating blow. Murat had arrived at Naples on the 6th of Sept. 6. September, and was followed on the 25th by his beautiful queen, Caroline Bonaparte. They were received with great rejoicings, in the midst of which Murat silently and secretly matured his plans for an attack upon Capri. This small but famous island, measuring three and a half miles east and west by two

¹ Stuart to Sec. of State, 3rd Oct. 1808 ; Bunbury, pp. 341-342.

1808. miles north and south, consists of two distinct masses of mountain, Capri on the east and Anacapri on the west. The twain are connected by an isthmus of low ground, from which the eastern front of Anacapri rises as a sheer precipice of limestone, ascensible only by a flight of over five hundred steps. The coast of both Anacapri and Capri is of the wildest and ruggedest; but in Capri there are two landing-places, the most important of which is Marina Grande on the north side, while in Anacapri there are also two, both of them narrow and difficult, to be found among the rocks. Since the two inlets in Capri were well watched, Murat decided, after careful reconnaissance by an able officer, to disembark in Anacapri; and selecting three thousand of his choicest troops, he placed them under command of his best General, Lamarque, for the venture. The whole were to be embarked in small craft; and, while the main body threatened the landing-places on Capri, a few boats were to steal round and land their troops, if possible, upon Anacapri.

Oct. 3. On the night of the 3rd of October the armament sailed in two divisions from Naples and Sorrento. It consisted of one frigate of forty-four guns, one corvette of twenty-two, thirty-seven gunboats, and seventy small transports. Hudson Lowe, who commanded the British garrison, having received vague information on that evening that trouble was coming, had doubled his guards and picquets; and since there was also a British frigate, the *Ambuscade*, of thirty-two guns, cruising in the Bay of Naples, he was little disquieted. Most unfortunately, however, the captain of the *Ambuscade*, instead of hanging upon the skirts of the flotilla and harassing it into panic and confusion, sailed away at once to seek

Oct. 4. assistance. Lamarque meanwhile, after threatening Marina Grande and an adjacent landing-place for some time, detached the larger of his two divisions—forty transports—to Damacuta on the west coast of Anacapri, while the gunboats continued to menace Marina. Five companies of the Maltese Regiment had already

been posted along the western front of Anacapri from 1808. Damacuta to Port Limbo; and Lowe now reinforced these with four more of the same corps, and with three companies of Corsicans. Major Hammill, the commanding officer of the Maltese, was in charge of the whole, while the Corsicans were led by Captain Church, known later as Sir Richard Church of the Greek war of independence, who had good local knowledge. The weather was so perfectly calm as to favour the French enterprise to the uttermost; but, looking to the extreme difficulty of a landing on Anacapri, Lowe felt no alarm.

At two o'clock in the afternoon he received a request Oct. 4. from Hammill for reinforcements, and an hour later he learned, to his astonishment, from a second message, that three hundred and fifty of the French had landed near Damacuta, and that the rest were standing in to the shore. Lamarque had in fact contrived to bring in a few boats unseen by the Maltese, and had thrown four or five score sharp-shooters upon the rocks, who, ensconcing themselves under good cover, after scrambling up the cliffs, protected the landing of their comrades. After a time the invaders were discovered; and the Maltese, forming in a crescent upon the terrace above them, opened a duel of musketry which, owing to the exposed position of the defenders, was not wholly to their advantage. Still the Maltese held their own, repelling every attempt to turn their northern flank; but the situation was none the less serious, for the great strength of Anacapri lay in the difficulty of effecting a disembarkation at all. Such, then, was the position when Lowe received Hammill's message. His first instinct was to march the whole of his garrison to the defence of Anacapri; but the hostile gunboats still remained opposite to Marina, while the second division of the French force now menaced a descent upon Tragara and Grotto Verde on the south side of Capri. Having too few men to defend both parts of the island, Lowe resolved, if things came to the worst, to hold Capri

1808. only. He therefore ordered Hammill, if hard pressed, Oct. 4. to retreat, leaving a garrison at Monte Solaro, the highest point of Anacapri, which lies not far from the head of the stairway that formed the only communication with Capri.

Before six o'clock the French retired from before Tragara, completely foiled by three companies of Corsicans ; and, being thus assured of the safety of Capri, Lowe shortly afterwards marched with three companies of the same regiment for Anacapri. To his dismay he was met by retreating Maltese and by a message from Church to the effect that the French were in possession of the head of the stairway, and that all communication with Capri was cut off. Lamarque had been too cunning for his opponents. Unable after four distinct attacks to make any headway against them by daylight, he had retired just before sunset, leaving a few men to fire at the Maltese sentries, who were conspicuous under a bright moonlight, and to keep them in continual alarm. Meanwhile the troops that had been repelled from Tragara had sailed round to Limbo and landed there unobserved ; when Lamarque, forming these into one column and his own men into another, ordered them to ascend at each extremity of the Maltese line and to assail their opponents on both flanks. Scrambling up accordingly, they burst in upon right and left of the Maltese with loud shouts, much beating of drums and volleys of musketry, to which their astonished opponents returned only a feeble fire before they turned and fled. Hammill, vainly trying to rally them, was killed with the bayonet, while the greater part of his men huddled themselves into their barracks and were there surrounded and taken. Of the party of one hundred and fifty soldiers left at Monte Solaro, four-fifths retired down the steps, but the remainder were captured. Of the Corsicans two companies, who were watching paths far out on both flanks, likewise escaped by the stairs, but Church's own company was intercepted by the enemy before he could reach the descent. With

consummate coolness he answered the challenge of the 1808. French sentries in their own tongue, and leading his Oct. 4. men to the track by which the enemy had come up from the sea, passed straight through the French lines, saying that he had just disembarked. By this ready device he gained the head of the stairway, from whence, finding a company of friends, he went back to garrison the redoubt of Monte Solaro. From the redoubt he addressed his letter, already mentioned, to Lowe, who at once sent a peasant by an unknown track to bid him evacuate the post. Thus guided, Church brought his men safely away, one only of them being killed by a fall from a precipice.

The casualties in this affair were not serious except in the matter of prisoners. The Corsicans lost fifteen killed and wounded and twenty missing ; the Maltese twenty-five killed and wounded and six hundred and eighty prisoners ; whereby Lowe's garrison was reduced to no more than seven hundred men. Retiring into Capri during the night, he received on the morning of the 5th a summons from Lamarque, which he rejected.

Oct. 5.

Thereupon the French cannon on the heights of Anacapri opened fire, with no better result than to drop a few shells among the French troops in the valley below, while the gunboats likewise began a cannonade which was hardly more effective. Lamarque then landed the rest of his force at Damacuta, and spent the two following days in landing stores and a few field-guns, which had to be hoisted to the summit of the tableland of Anacapri and thence lowered to the level of the valley. This work and the building of batteries took some time ; and on the evening of the 6th Sicilian gunboats came Oct. 6. in sight of the garrison, becalmed but close at hand.

On the morning of the 8th they approached the island, Oct. 8. together with the frigates *Mercury* and *Ambuscade*, and, attacking the French flotilla with great gallantry, drove it back to Naples. Here therefore was Lamarque absolutely isolated and cut off ; and, as Lowe had contrived to send a boat to Messina on the evening of the

1808. 4th to ask for reinforcements, everything pointed to a disastrous end to Murat's expedition.

Now, however, the weather, which had favoured the French so far by its extraordinary calmness, favoured them once more by a succession of violent storms. Troops and stores were embarked at once from Messina, only to be tossed about for ten days in vain and driven back to port. In the first of the transports, which contained all that Lowe needed most, the commanding officer, being attacked by brain-fever owing to excessive sea-sickness, ordered the ship back to Messina when within a few leagues of Capri. Lowe, meanwhile, with the help of a few marines from the *Ambuscade*, made a good defence; but his men were worn out by incessant

Oct. 13. duty under arms. On the 13th the enemy's flotilla again appeared in great force with supplies and stores, and was at once engaged by the Sicilian gunboats; but by a freak of fortune the wind was too light for the two British frigates to take part in the action. Their captains were obliged to lower their boats and tow their ships out of harm's way; and the Sicilians, deprived of their support, abandoned the fight and allowed the enemy's vessels to come in. With his ammunition replenished, Lamarque, who had for some days past established his sharp-shooters close under the walls of the town, opened fire from several guns, breaching the weak wall which was the only defence of the town and severely wounding Church and another officer. Lowe retrenched the breach, but he could not supply the places of the fallen officers; and when

Oct. 15. on the evening of the 15th he received a second summons from Lamarque, his position was sufficiently serious. Ammunition for some of his cannon had failed absolutely; for other pieces and for muskets there was enough for one night's firing only. The men were exhausted by twelve consecutive nights under arms; and the captain of the *Ambuscade* had warned him that in light winds he could not cut off the enemy's communication with the mainland. The French

therefore could pour men and supplies into the island 1808. as they wished.

On the other hand, transports with six hundred men from Messina lay off Capri ; but they had brought with them neither artillery nor stores, which were Lowe's great need, and their strength was insufficient to drive out the enemy. Lowe had grave doubts as to the expediency of allowing the soldiers to land at all, but consented that they should disembark at Tragara, keeping their boats in readiness to put off again. To gain time, Lowe asked Lamarque to meet him on the following morning ; but during the night a gale sprang up, which blew the transports off the coast after they had landed few more than two hundred men. In a conference with Lamarque on the 16th, Lowe learned that Reynier Oct. 16. had landed at Capri, having been sent over by Murat to hasten the operations ; wherefore, seeing no hope of relief, he drew up terms of capitulation, which Lamarque accepted. The terms allowed the garrison to depart, and special articles provided that the French should not seek to enlist the Corsicans from the British service into their own ; but this condition, and indeed every other article in the convention, was shamelessly violated. Bad weather prevented the embarkation of the British garrison, except in small bodies, for a week, during which time the French did their utmost by bribes, promises, and ill-treatment to coerce the Corsicans into desertion. They succeeded in seducing in all about one hundred and twenty recruits ; but, in Lowe's own words, the men preferred to lie on the rocks for nights together with little food, and to embark at the risk of their lives, rather than take service with their enemies.¹

These, however, were but details. The main fact was that Capri was lost ; and though the mishap was of small importance, for Capri was not of the slightest value, still the capture of so strong a place was reckoned as

¹ Stuart to Sec. of State, 18th Oct. 1808 (enclosing Lowe's report) ; Bunbury, pp. 344-353.

1808. disgraceful and a reproach to the British. Without exceptional good luck Murat's venture must have ended in disaster, in which case Lowe would have been exalted as a hero. As matters fell out, an enterprise, in which the odds against success were at least twenty to one, was brought to a triumphant conclusion; and the surrender of Capri was remembered against Lowe to the end of his life, very unjustly, for he had done all that was possible for a man to do. Most startling of all, however, was the effect of the incident in Sicily. There panic seemed to seize upon all classes; the old fame of French superiority in arms was restored, and confidence in the power of British protection was seriously weakened. Distrust of the foreign corps in the British service was also engendered; and, more significant still, the men of these foreign corps, in spite of the greater advantages offered by British pay and rations, began to desert in considerable numbers, with the express purpose of passing the straits and joining the enemy. On the other hand, Murat's hold upon the Neapolitans was prodigiously strengthened; he was able to raise many more recruits than Joseph had done; and he pushed his troops triumphantly southward into Calabria, with great show of preparations for an invasion of Sicily. The demonstration was in great degree mere braggadocio, for the arrival of three British ships of the line and some frigates at Messina had assured the safety of the island. But the reputation won at Maida was lost, and the man who called himself the victor of Maida was too shallow and incompetent to retrieve it.

The year 1808 therefore ended ignobly for the British arms in the Mediterranean. In October Castlereagh wrote again to Stuart earnestly advocating the detachment of a part of his force to Catalonia; but the letter never came to hand, and even had it arrived, would have found Stuart, as before, disinclined to accept the proposal. Nor was he wholly without justification. At most he could have spared but six thousand men for such an object; he had no cavalry; and his best officers

as we have seen, had left him for more congenial 1808. service elsewhere. The energy of the new King of Naples in administrative and military reforms made him a far more formidable adversary than Joseph; and disaffection towards the British in Sicily was heightened alike by Murat's popularity and by the fame of his success at Capri. Yet a more capable and less unwilling man than Stuart would never have allowed such an opportunity as that offered by Catalonia to slip by. He professed to be biding his time against the day when Italy should follow the example of Spain, though he admitted that there was no parallel between the two countries, Spain being unsubdued, whereas Italy had been subjugated and disarmed. He dabbled in negotiations with the Court of Palermo for a concerted offensive movement; but he welcomed every pretext for delay. In brief, the man was reluctant to be concerned with the operations in Spain and, as is usual in such cases, could find abundance of reasons to fortify him in his disinclination. From this time forward affairs in the Mediterranean will possess only a subordinate interest for us; and we shall, fortunately, have little more to do with this poor vain cherisher of an undeserved reputation. It is time now to turn to greater events and greater men in the Iberian Peninsula.¹

¹ Sec. of State to Stuart, 13th, 14th Oct.; Stuart to Sec. of State, 14th Nov., 1st, 14th, 26th Dec. 1808.

CHAPTER XVIII

1807. Our last sight of Spain was at the moment when Oct. King Charles and his son Ferdinand, having each of them referred his side of their quarrel to Napoleon, had made the latter the arbiter of their own and their country's destiny. This was a stroke of good luck which exactly suited the Emperor's designs. On the Oct. 16. 16th of October, as we have seen, he had given orders for the assembling of a second force at Bayonne, to consist of three divisions of infantry and two brigades of cavalry, or about twenty-five thousand men in all, under General Dupont. On the 5th of November he directed the formation of a Corps of observation of the Atlantic coast, thirty-four thousand men under Moncey; and early in December he collected a Division of the Western Pyrenees, which he placed first under General Mouton, and shortly afterwards under General Merle. Dupont was told that his headquarters must be at Vitoria by the 20th of December, and his entire force between that town and Burgos before Christmas Day; also that he must announce that he was come to support Junot against a meditated attack of the British. Moncey was likewise to advance upon Vitoria, arranging that his three divisions should arrive there in succession between the 5th and 10th of January. Mouton was to move upon Pamplona, and enter that place upon the 8th of January. Lastly, late in December yet another Division of the Eastern Pyrenees was formed, chiefly of Neapolitan and Swiss battalions, under General Duhesme, who received orders to enter Spain on the

9th of February and advance straight upon Barcelona. 1808. By the treaty of Fontainebleau Napoleon was empowered to send forty thousand men to aid Junot, upon giving due notice to the King of Spain, if the British should land troops for the defence of Portugal. The British had as yet not a thought of an expedition to Lisbon, except to cover the embarkation of the Braganzas. Yet without a word of notice to the Court of Madrid Napoleon did not hesitate to order, not forty thousand, but from seventy to eighty thousand troops to cross the Spanish frontier.¹

Dupont and Moncey duly pushed forward towards Burgos, where their appearance naturally caused great alarm ; but when, in the second week of February, Feb. 16. Duhesme led his corps into Catalonia, where it could give no possible support to Junot, alarm was converted into blank dismay. Still, such was the helpless servility of King Charles and Godoy that they made neither protest nor resistance. Having moved his armies peaceably to the points which he had designed, Napoleon passed without delay to treacherous aggression. On the 16th of February the French soldiers round Pamplona assembled without arms outside the citadel, and, forming two sides, began to pelt each other with snow-balls. The Spanish garrison, unsuspecting, came out to see the sport. Presently, one party of the French, feigning defeat in the mock fight, made a rush for the gate, disarmed the sentries, seized the weapons of the guard, and, with the support of a battalion which had been brought out for drill close by, mastered the citadel before the Spaniards could realise what had happened. A fortnight later the French General in command of the troops at Barcelona assembled the whole of his division, ostensibly for review before pursuing his march southward, and, after passing through the city on his way, suddenly wheeled round and surprised the citadel. On the 5th of March another officer, after overt menace Mar. 5. Feb. 29.

¹ *Corres. de Napoleon*, 13,258, 13,323, 13,326, 13,343, 13,344, 13,353, 13,378, 13,406, 13,412-13, 13,496, 13,586, 13,588, 13,721.

1808. of assault, received the surrender of St. Sebastian ; Mar. 18. and on the 18th a few French troops, having gained admission to Figueras under false pretences, threw open the gates to their comrades and mastered that fortress also. Thus practically the whole of the defences of the frontier were seized without bloodshed by the most shameless perfidy. Napoleon had never been a scrupulous man ; but not until now had he shown so open and unabashed effrontery in defiance of European opinion. Meanwhile the next step had been already prepared. On the 26th of February he had appointed his brother-in-law, Murat, Grand Duke of Berg, as his vicegerent and General-in-chief in Spain ; and the new commander having arrived on the 13th of Mar. 15. March at Burgos, marched on the 15th upon Madrid.

Godoy was the first to realise the significance of this movement. For a moment he hesitated between the acceptance of new and degrading conditions, secretly brought by his agent Izquierdo from Paris, and flight, and then decided upon the latter course. The miserable old King, who was of course comprehended in this arrangement, opposed the project for a time, but finally yielded, as usual, to his favourite. The Court was at the moment at Aranjuez, about thirty miles south of Madrid ; and Godoy, summoning the household troops from the capital, gave orders for the Court to start on the 18th for Seville. But by that time the movements of the French had kindled men's minds to deadly wrath and suspicion. It was noised abroad that the Prince of the Peace had arranged in concert with Napoleon both the invasion of the French armies and the treacherous surrender of the fortresses on the frontier, all with the object of driving the King from Spain to take refuge, like his brother monarch of Portugal, in his possessions

Mar. 17. of the New World. On the night of the 17th the populace rose in insurrection, stormed Godoy's house, and, failing to find him there, first battered its contents to pieces, and then rushed to the palace crying out for his head. In abject terror the King and Queen called

upon their son to propitiate the people, and Ferdinand, 1808. stepping out on to the balcony, announced that the Prince of the Peace had been dismissed from all his offices. The declaration was received with loud cheers for the heir to the throne; and the rioters withdrew apparently satisfied.

On the following day, however, disturbances broke out again. Godoy, after lying in concealment for thirty-six hours, had been driven by hunger to attempt escape, and, being at once recognised in the streets, was in danger of being torn to pieces. He was rescued with great difficulty by a party of life-guards, who brought him into the palace, round which the mob again surged, furiously shouting for his blood. Once again the King and Queen resorted in despair to Ferdinand, who, working upon their fears, persuaded the old man to abdicate in his favour. Charles, helpless without Godoy, readily complied. The favourite was escorted to safe keeping in the Castle of Villaviciosa; and at seven o'clock on the evening of the 19th the deed of abdication was signed, after which, amid general rejoicings, Ferdinand the Seventh was acclaimed King of Spain. But meanwhile Murat had been steadily marching upon Madrid, and on the 23rd he entered the capital, not Mar. 23. neglecting military precautions, with some twenty-five thousand men. The King and Queen had already found means to inform him that their abdication had been extorted from them by force; and Murat, who expected the throne of Spain for himself, was by no means well pleased to find it occupied no longer by a weak and doting sovereign, but by a young prince whose accession had been welcomed by the whole nation. Had Ferdinand shown becoming spirit, taken his stand as representative of his people and called upon Murat to explain what he was doing in the capital at the head of an armed force, he would have rallied not only every loyal Spaniard but every enemy of Napoleon to his support. But Ferdinand was a Bourbon and a Spanish Bourbon. He actually entered Madrid in procession

1808. on the day after Murat had occupied it, and by an
Mar. 24. abject epistle threw himself upon the mercy of Napoleon. With a letter from the father declaring his abdication to be null, and a letter from the son appealing to him as the only support of his own accession, the Emperor held the game in his hands. He could with perfect show of consistency oust either or both of them; and, since he had long made up his mind to end the dynasty of the Spanish Bourbons, he decided to oust both. No sooner did Napoleon receive the announcement of the abdication of King Charles than he wrote to offer the crown of Spain to his brother Louis, King of Holland. Louis, though a sufficiently ridiculous person, was wise enough to decline the honour, which was thereupon tendered to the elder brother Joseph, King of Naples; and Joseph, though more astute than Louis, was so much enamoured of his own importance as to accept it.

Meanwhile for a fortnight Ferdinand awaited the Emperor's decision with great uneasiness, which was not lessened by the insolence of the vicegerent. However, Murat gave him to understand that Napoleon was on his way to Madrid, and that it would be as well to send some person of distinction to welcome him at April 5. the frontier. Ferdinand on the 5th of April dutifully sent his brother Don Carlos; and two days later a new agent of the Emperor, General Savary, came upon the scene, bringing with him what purported to be his master's private baggage. To all appearance Savary was intent only upon preparations for Napoleon's arrival; but his real business was to entice Ferdinand into France. He, therefore, persuaded the Prince to travel in that direction as far as Burgos, in the hope of meeting the Emperor there on the 13th. Reaching Burgos on the 12th, the party found no sign of Napoleon; and Savary, blaming himself for the mistake, pressed Ferdinand to move yet two stages northward as far as Vitoria. April 14. Here again there was no sign of the Emperor; and a letter from Don Carlos announced that His Majesty was not expected even at Bayonne until the 15th.

Ferdinand became suspicious and troublesome ; and 1808. Savary only succeeded in quieting him by a promise to go forward and ascertain the Emperor's wishes. After four days' absence he returned with a letter April 18. from Napoleon expressing a wish to converse with the Spanish Prince, but wrapping up the purport of his own intentions in fold upon fold of verbiage and equivocation. Ferdinand and his attendants in vain tried to divine the true meaning of the document ; but Savary, a ready liar, came to the rescue with a favourable interpretation. On the next day Ferdinand started April 19. again for the north, not without difficulty, for the population of Vitoria strove forcibly to prevent his departure ; and on the 20th he arrived at Bayonne. April 20. The Emperor invited him to dinner on the same evening, but declined to discuss business with him, and, when the meal was over, sent him back to the quarters prepared for him. An hour later Savary called on him to communicate the Emperor's decision that it would be best for Spain that the Bourbons should cease to reign, and that they should deliver up their throne to a prince of the house of Bonaparte.

Ferdinand could hardly believe his ears. One after another he sent the most subtle of his councillors to Napoleon, attempting to shake the Emperor's resolution, but in vain. Ferdinand must abdicate, so said the master of Europe ; and having trepanned his victim by tricks as base as those of a crimp, the master of Europe meant to be obeyed. But here Ferdinand's invincible obstinacy was too much for Napoleon. Neither threats nor temptations could induce him to sign away his rights ; until the Emperor, bethinking him that Charles had revoked his own abdication, resolved that the poor old man should put forth his power as rightful King of Spain to extinguish the power of his son. He sent for the King therefore to Bayonne ; and on the 30th the Royal party arrived, Charles April 30. himself, his Queen, and their precious favourite Godoy. Having received his royal guests with particular

1808. civility, Napoleon on the next day confronted them May 1. with their son, when Charles formally ordered Ferdinand to sign an absolute renunciation of his throne. Napoleon threw in some threats to strengthen the demand, but Ferdinand persisted in his refusal ; and, after a stormy and most unedifying scene between parents and son, the Emperor closed the interview. For the moment he was fairly beaten, and was still busy with machinations to gain his object, when news arrived from Madrid which prompted him to have done with manœuvring and bring the matter to a peremptory end.

Ever since the departure of King Charles for Bayonne there had been disquiet in Madrid. Something was going forward which the people vaguely suspected to be wrong ; and the French army, instead of moving on to Gibraltar or Portugal, remained stationary. At

April 29. last on the 29th of April there arrived at the capital a Spaniard who had contrived to escape from Bayonne, bringing a verbal message from Ferdinand to the Council of Regency, with information of Napoleon's behaviour and designs. The news in one form or another was soon known all over the city, inflaming the

May 1. general excitement ; and on the 1st of May Murat brought matters to a crisis by ordering the Council of Regency to deliver up to him Ferdinand's younger brother Don Francisco, and his sister, the widowed Queen of Etruria, with her children. This was going too far. The greater part of the Royal Family was already at Bayonne, and the populace was not disposed to allow the one remaining prince to be carried thither

May 2. also. On the morning of the 2nd of May a crowd of angry citizens assembled by the gates of the palace, and, when the carriage of Don Francisco appeared, attacked the officers who were to accompany the young prince, and tore the vehicle to pieces. Murat called out the French battalion on guard at the palace, which speedily dispersed these particular rioters by remorseless firing ; but the sound of the volleys called the whole

population into the streets armed with every kind of ^{1808.} weapon. Furious with rage, some made a hot but ^{May 2.} fruitless attack upon the battalion at the palace, while the rest fell savagely upon every isolated French soldier in the streets. For an hour they had their way ; and had the Spanish regiments joined the populace, as they had every inclination to do, the fight would have been serious indeed. Two captains of Artillery managed to open the gates of the artillery-park to the rioters and enabled them to seize some hundreds of muskets ; but the remainder of the officers would not move without orders from the Council of Regency. After a time French troops came pouring in from the camps outside the town, and, in spite of fierce resistance in some quarters, quickly put down the disturbance. The two officers at the artillery-park, after repelling two assaults with heavy loss to the enemy, were killed, and the few hundred insurgents who fought under them shared the same fate. In four hours all was over. Under a drastic decree Murat arrested about one hundred persons and shot them without further ceremony ; and, at the cost of about a thousand fallen on both sides, order was restored in Madrid.

Intelligence of this outbreak reached Bayonne on the 4th. Napoleon seized the opportunity to summon ^{May 4.} Ferdinand before him once more. In the presence of his parents he charged him with having excited the insurrection and called upon him to abdicate before midnight, or take the consequences ; and he hinted, if he did not actually state, that the consequences of refusal would be death. A murder or two, more or less, was no great matter to Napoleon ; and Ferdinand, realising the fact, yielded at last and signed the act of abdication. Twenty-four hours earlier the feeble old Charles had likewise surrendered to the Emperor by formal treaty his rights to the throne of Spain and of all her possessions ; and it remained therefore only to constrain Ferdinand to renounce his ultimate rights as heir to the crown. By the 10th of May this also was ^{May 10.}

1808. accomplished ; and the royal family of Spain was then consigned to France, Charles and his Queen to Compiègne, Ferdinand and his brother to Valençay, where they were entrusted to the custody of Talleyrand. Then came the task, so often accomplished as well by the Directory as by Napoleon himself in Italy and elsewhere, of manufacturing a popular demand for French rule in Spain. With considerable difficulty Murat dragooned the Council of Regency into sending a petition to Napoleon for a new king and suggesting

May 13. his brother Joseph for the honour. This done, the Emperor nominated a miscellaneous collection of one hundred and fifty Spanish dignitaries, who should attend him in person at Bayonne and there ask of him a sovereign. It is distressing to record that ninety-one of these persons stooped to obey this humiliating order.

June 15. On the 15th of June they met at Bayonne ; on the 8th of July Napoleon sent the new constitution, which they had drawn up, to the Tsar Alexander ; and on the 9th Joseph Bonaparte crossed the frontier of France and entered his new kingdom.¹

Long before that time the whole of Spain had risen in arms to drive him out. The news of the insurrection in Madrid spreading rapidly through the country, with no little exaggeration of the severity with which it had been suppressed, had embittered men's minds more than ever against France ; and when upon this there followed detailed information of the occurrences at Bayonne, the smouldering discontent suddenly leapt into flame. It was one of the most remarkable movements recorded in history, a movement which perhaps was possible only in Spain, where the various provinces, kept asunder by natural obstacles and deep-seated jealousies, were still almost distinct kingdoms. Such a peculiarity might seem fatal to a general revolt, but it was not so. For this rising was not the work of a leader or leaders, but sprang into life through the spontaneous impulse of millions of proud and sensitive men, who resented the

¹ *Corres. de Napoleon*, 14, 170.

insults offered to their nation by Napoleon as personal 1808. to each of themselves. Such a tumultuous outburst might have spent itself in mere impotent fury had it been compelled to seek direction from a single capital city ; but here the provincial instinct was invaluable. The outbreak at Madrid was like a beacon-signal which, being caught up after some hesitation by a single district, was then rapidly repeated by the rest. In each province leaders came forward to organise the rebellion upon a strictly provincial basis ; and thus, instead of a single great movement, which at the outset might have failed from sheer unwieldiness, there were a dozen, all working upon different lines yet all animated by the same spirit—intense rage at the idea of turning Spain into a dependency of France, and, as a natural consequence, mad and uncalculating hatred of the French. In the later stages, as shall be seen, the provincial leaven in the national ferment was in danger of reducing the whole to naught ; but at the outset its value was incalculable. Moreover, the provincial spirit was itself due in great measure to the conformation of the country, Spain being subdivided by chains of impassable mountains. Hence even the enemy was to some extent compelled to defer to it, because his troops could not often pass easily or rapidly from district to district. Catalonia, to take the extreme case, remained from beginning to end of the struggle practically a distinct seat of war.

Asturias, which had opened the eight centuries of conflict with the Moors, was also the first province to rise against the French. From the 9th of May onward May 9. there were disturbances in its capital, Oviedo, where, as it happened, the Provincial Council was in session. This body, a relic of earlier days of autonomy, furnished a centre of direction and organisation which did its work so well that on the 24th the city and the May 24. surrounding country rose with one accord, imprisoned the partisans of the French, and on the next day May 25. formally declared war against Napoleon Bonaparte.

1808. Nor was this magnificent audacity a mere matter of words, for at the same time the Council ordered eighteen thousand men to be raised for the defence of Asturias against invasion, and a few days later despatched two emissaries to London to beg help of the British

May 30. Government. On the very day when these gentlemen sailed, Galicia likewise rose and secured for the national cause the two great arsenals of Coruña and Ferrol, with their garrisons of some forty thousand men. Leon meanwhile had already proclaimed the sovereignty of King Ferdinand ; and the spirit of insurrection passed rapidly through the northern provinces, while Aragon, Valencia, Murcia, and Andalusia caught it up in the east and south, occasionally with outbreaks of bloodthirsty frenzy against real or supposed traitors. In a few weeks the French could hardly be said to hold a foot of Spanish soil outside the range of their cannon.

Then, however, the evils of the provincial system began to appear. Committees sprang up in all directions to govern the several provinces, levy troops, and use their resources for the conduct of the war. Six of these were really important, namely, that of Seville, which claimed the title of "Junta of Spain and the Indies," and those of Murcia, Valencia, Aragon, Galicia, and Catalonia ; but all wished to retain absolute control of their troops and to confine their operations as far as possible within their own boundaries. The French, on the other hand, with the exception of the isolated force at Barcelona, were united and compact. Their armies were based upon the fortresses of St. Sebastian and Pamplona, the former commanding the pass of Irun, the latter the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles over the Pyrenees ; and from thence the troops extended along the great road by Vitoria, Burgos, and Madrid to Toledo on the Tagus. Thus situated they cleft Northern and Central Spain into two parts, severing the insurgents of the east from their brethren of the west ; while from Madrid, to which centre all the roads in Spain converged, they could strike out in

every direction. On the other hand, the line that they held from the Pyrenees to Toledo measured some three hundred miles, and was therefore necessarily vulnerable; while the ports of Ferrol and Coruña on the west coast, and of Tarragona on the east, afforded facilities for an enemy, which commanded the sea, to land a force upon either flank. The insurrection, however, for some weeks caused little apparent anxiety to Murat, who continued even till the beginning of June to write smooth things to his master at Bayonne. Napoleon also misapprehended the importance of the movement. The news of the various outbreaks reached him, as they occurred, in succession, wherefore he judged them to be nothing more than a series of petty isolated insurrections which could easily be suppressed in detail; for he considered that revolts in Spain would be no more formidable than revolts in Egypt. As regards the disconnection of the several risings the Emperor was undoubtedly correct; and, so far as his experience went, he was not unreasonable in arguing that they were unimportant. Simultaneous revolt in various parts of Italy would have been nothing very terrible; but Spain, as he was to discover to his cost, was very different from Italy. The actions of the Juntas or other revolutionary bodies might be various; but the feeling of all Spaniards was one and the same. Not realising this, he decided to deal with the trouble by means of detached columns, and to treat the whole matter as one of police rather than of military operations. The man had, in fact, lost his hold upon reality; and while all Spain was springing furious to arms, he was dreaming of expeditions to Rio de la Plata, to Algeria, Sicily, or Egypt, and even of invasion of England.¹

The Spanish regular infantry at this time consisted of six battalions of Guards, one hundred and five of the Line, twelve of light infantry, and twenty-four of foreigners; the cavalry of twelve light and twelve

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 13,952, 13,997, 14,005.

1808. heavy regiments ; and the artillery of four regiments. May. Besides these there was a local Militia of forty-one battalions, which had been embodied since 1804. According to its establishment, the infantry, exclusive of foreigners, should have numbered ninety-eight thousand rank and file : in May 1808 it could muster no more than fifty-eight thousand. The cavalry was less weak, having nearly fifteen thousand of all ranks out of an establishment of nearly seventeen thousand ; but on the other hand it had only nine thousand horses. The best both of the infantry and cavalry, fourteen battalions and twenty-five squadrons, had been sent, as we have seen, upon Napoleon's requisition, to Denmark, the entire contingent counting some fifteen thousand men. Of the remainder, twenty-nine battalions of regular infantry, twenty-six of Militia, six regiments of cavalry, and one of artillery were in Andalusia, and could be assembled by the Junta of Seville. In Galicia again there were twenty-eight battalions of regulars, fourteen of Militia, and one of artillery, subject to the Junta of that province. The rest were so much dispersed that they could at best serve only to stiffen raw levies. The military forces as a whole were, through long neglect, in a poor and backward condition ; there was a great dearth of officers ; the training and organisation were obsolescent ; the departments of transport and supply can hardly be said to have existed ; and the general officers were for the most part deficient both in knowledge and experience. There had been a time when the Spanish army and its leaders were the models of Europe ; and in no country could be found better material for the making of soldiers. Brave, temperate, frugal, and hardy, the Spaniards, when trained and disciplined, not only fight as well as men of other nations, but have hardly their peers in power of marching. Still, like his neighbour the French soldier, the Spaniard must have confidence in his commanders or he is naught ; and the besetting sin of his nation—*jactancia*, boastfulness

—leads him to forget that, if troops are to trust their leaders, their leaders must first be able to trust them. As was the case with the French levies of 1792, the Spaniards were far too much disposed to require a General, on pain of death, to lead them against the enemy, and to shoot him as a traitor when, as the inevitable result of imperfect training and discipline, they themselves fled in panic at the first onset. British officers, it must be said once for all, did not count the Spanish regular army as regular troops at all, greatly though many of them admired the general spirit of the nation; and beyond doubt they were right. To reproach the Spanish Army with its inefficiency after years of the corrupt rule of Godoy would be manifestly unjust; but there is no escape from the facts that it was not only inefficient but that national pride made it also unteachable.

Napoleon was doubtless well aware of this, yet even so his dispositions were astonishingly rash. In all he had about ninety-one thousand men south of the Pyrenees, exclusive of the force in Portugal, which was cut off from the rest by the risings in Estremadura and Castile. Of these, twenty-five thousand held the line of communication between Burgos and St. Sebastian; fifty-three thousand were concentrated about Madrid; and thirteen thousand were in Catalonia. The two main masses of the Spanish army lay in Andalusia on his front, and in Galicia upon his right flank. The former was obviously the first and most important object; for the south of Spain had not yet felt the weight of his arm, and with its fertility, its resources, and its port of Cadiz always open to supplies from England, might give him much trouble. General Dupont, a young officer of great though recent reputation, was therefore appointed to march on Cordova and Seville, and to subjugate Andalusia with thirteen thousand men. Napoleon by no means attached the same weight to the large remnant of the Spanish army in Galicia. The possession of Zaragoza, lying

1808. as it does astride of the Ebro and commanding the road between Barcelona and Madrid, seemed to him essential for many reasons. It would protect his left flank ; it would secure his communications between the capital and the passes of the eastern Pyrenees ; it would form a link of union between his armies in Catalonia and the Castiles ; it would go far towards the reduction of Aragon ; and it would isolate the insurrectionary movements in eastern from those in western Spain. Further, the subjugation of Valencia and Murcia and, above all, the occupation of the naval arsenal at Carthagena demanded, in his judgment, to be immediately taken in hand ; after which the rest of the country could be subdued at his leisure. The one other point which he could not afford to neglect was Santander on the north coast, where France was powerless to check the possible influx of an auxiliary army by way of the sea.

To these several objects, therefore, he resolved to devote such forces as were at his disposal. While Dupont drew two divisions of the central army to the south from Madrid, Moncey was to take from it nine thousand more men, and march upon Valencia by way of Cuenca ; and Duhesme was simultaneously to detach a column along the coast from Barcelona to threaten Valencia from the north. To deal with Zaragoza, Bessières was to detach General Lefebvre-Desnoëttes with four thousand men from Burgos ; and, to restore order along the northern coast, the Marshal was to send a brigade under General Merle to Santander. When these four columns should have marched, there would remain about thirty thousand men in Madrid, eighteen thousand on the line of communication between Burgos and St. Sebastian, and ten thousand at Barcelona. For the communications of the columns themselves there was taken no thought whatever.

Dupont and Moncey were the first to move. June 4. Moncey left Madrid on the 4th of June and, reaching Cuenca on the 11th unopposed, halted there for a week, thus giving ample time for the assembling of

the few thousand Spanish regular troops that were 1808. scattered over Valencia and Murcia. Spurred on by orders from Madrid, the Marshal had to choose between two roads for his advance, one over the mountains through deep and dangerous defiles by the pass of Cabrillas, the other further to the south over the plains by San Clemente and Almansa. He decided to take the former : the Spanish General made sure that he would choose the latter. Hence the defiles where, as Moncey confessed, six thousand good troops might have stopped the Grand Army itself with Napoleon at its head, were weakly held and were easily forced by the French ; and, while the Spanish General vainly waited for him at Almansa, the Marshal crossed the plain of Valencia seventy miles to north and east, and on the 26th summoned the city to surrender. June 26. The Junta answered that the people of Valencia preferred death to any negotiations. The city had no defences but a wet ditch and mediæval walls, but the inhabitants had barricaded the gates and thrown up such hasty fortifications as the short warning of Moncey's approach had permitted them. Moreover, though the number of regular troops in the garrison did not exceed fifteen hundred, there were more than ten times that number of men ready to resist an assault. Having no siege-artillery, Moncey had no choice but to carry the place by storm, which he duly attempted. His young soldiers achieved more than could possibly have been expected of them, but were beaten off after two successive attacks with very heavy loss. This reverse brought his campaign, and threatened to bring his whole force, to an abrupt end. The country had risen behind him and his communications were hopelessly severed. There was no news of the detachment from Barcelona, which should have made a diversion in his favour to the north ; and there was every probability that the force from Almansa was marching up to cut off his retreat. In these circumstances he decided to retire at once through the plains by way

1808. of Almansa and San Clemente, and marched accordingly on the 29th of June. His Spanish adversary, who had guarded the road by Almansa when Moncey was crossing the pass of Cabrillas, now occupied the pass of Cabrillas while the Marshal took the road by Almansa ; and thus the French force, though encumbered by a large convoy of wounded, and not a little demoralised by its reverse, arrived safely July 15. on the 15th of July at its quarters about Madrid. Had fortune been adverse instead of peculiarly kind to him, Moncey might well have lost half, if not the whole, of his troops. As things fell out, he returned in safety indeed, but wholly baffled in his attempt to execute the Emperor's orders.

May 24. Dupont marched from Toledo on the 24th of May, passed over the plains of La Mancha and the tremendous barrier of the Sierra Morena unmolested, and reached the Guadalquivir six miles from Cordova before he encountered the slightest opposition. There a feeble force of fourteen hundred regular troops and militia, encumbered by some thousands of peasants, attempted to bar his passage of the river, but was easily dispersed ; and Dupont, proceeding after a short halt to Cordova itself, treated the firing of a few scattered shots from the walls as a pretext for the storm and sack of the city. His troops were completely out of control for twenty-four hours ; and the plunder of all ranks filled some five hundred waggons, the officers as usual not being the least rapacious among the pillagers. A worse example for a mob of young soldiers, such as Dupont was commanding, could not be imagined ; and it is surprising that, if only for the sake of their discipline and the safety of the force at large, the General should have given them the opportunity for such infamous conduct. But such were the ways of the French in the field, duly consecrated by the precedent of Napoleon himself in Italy. These excesses brought their punishment at once. Dupont could spare no troops to keep clear the line of his communications ; but he had left

behind a few scattered posts to protect his sick and 1808. his stragglers, and a few officers to sketch the country. Upon these the Spaniards instantly turned with savage cruelty. Some of the hapless French were blinded, others put to death by unspeakable tortures ; and such as were fortunate enough to receive warning of the coming terror, made with all haste for Toledo and Madrid. In a short time Dupont's force was as completely isolated as if it had been in the Sahara ; and the war had assumed a barbarous aspect which, where French and Spanish alone were concerned, it never wholly lost.

Meanwhile General Castaños had been busily employed in assembling and organising the army of Andalusia. The rumour of his advance with twenty-five thousand men, and of a British force, doubtless Spencer's, about to land at Cadiz, brought home to Dupont the peril of his isolation, and impaired his nerve. After nine days' stay at Cordova he decided June 16. to fall back, and on the 19th of June reached Andujar at the foot of the Sierra Morena, carrying the plunder of Cordova with him. Here he halted and sent urgent messages to Madrid for reinforcements. Murat had returned to France on sick leave ; and General Savary, though junior to Moncey and to many other of the French commanders in Spain, had been left in charge of Murat's duties. Savary soon became as nervous as Dupont himself over the situation of the army of Andalusia, and ordered nearly seven thousand men under General Vedel to reinforce it. So completely was Dupont cut off from Madrid that he heard the first news of Vedel's approach from Vedel himself on the 27th of June. However, his force, much weakened June 27. by sickness, was now raised to seventeen thousand men ; and after a punitive raid upon Jaen, he took up a defensive position extending for fifteen miles along the Guadalquivir from Andujar to the ferry of Mengibar. A further reinforcement of from five to six thousand men under General Gobert crossed the

1808. Sierra Morena early in July, raising the strength of July. his army to some twenty-two thousand men, not, it is true, of the best quality, but still far superior to any that the Spaniards could produce to confront them.

Castafios meanwhile was approaching with some thirty-four thousand men, including fewer than three thousand cavalry. A very large proportion of these were recruits, though with some leaven of veterans; but at least one-third were exceedingly raw; and indeed, though it was long before the Spaniards again put into the field so good an army, its quality cannot be described as otherwise than poor. On the 11th of July it had arrived within ten miles of Andujar; and Castafios, underestimating Dupont's force by nearly one-half, laid his plans to attack the French in front with two divisions, while two more should pass, one round each flank, and fall simultaneously upon their

July rear. The operations began on the 13th of July and 13-19. lasted till the 19th, when, through a singular sequence of circumstances, but chiefly owing to the mismanagement of Dupont and Vedel, they proved completely success-

July 23. ful. On the 23rd of July nearly eighteen thousand Frenchmen laid down their arms and were marched away to the coast to be shipped, according to the terms of surrender, to Rochefort. But here Admiral Collingwood intervened, declining to allow the French army to pass the sea without orders from his Government. Canning, as a favour to Spain, presently consented that the prisoners might be landed at Nantes or L'Orient; but the Junta of Seville and, later on, the Supreme Junta, ignored the whole arrangement; and the unfortunate Frenchmen, after much ill-usage, were finally sent to the island of Caprera, where more than half of them died of cold and starvation, and the remainder were not released until 1814. Such was the final issue of the capitulation of Baylen, the sharpest check that Napoleon had received since the surrender of the French army in Egypt. Moreover, however much Dupont may be blamed for the mis-

conduct of the actual operations in the field, the fact 1808. must remain that the Emperor himself was chiefly responsible for the disaster. He was guilty in truth of much the same mistake as was made by Lake when he sent Monson down into Central India. Nothing, however, can diminish the credit of the Spaniards for so great a triumph over so formidable an enemy.

The French operations to southward, therefore, were a signal failure ; and the fact was not without its effect upon their movements in the north. At first they seemed likely to carry all before them. On the 2nd June 2. of June two columns marched from the troops under Bessières's command, the one upon Logroño, the other under General Merle upon Santander. Logroño was easily occupied, with heavy loss to the ill-armed peasants who tried to defend it ; and Merle, with the second column, was about to force the passes leading on Santander, when he was recalled by the news that General Cuesta was forming an army at Valladolid to cut the French communications between Burgos and Madrid. Reinforced by some three thousand men, Merle met the force of Cuesta on the 12th of June June 12. at Cabezon, and in a few moments scattered it to the four winds. The Spaniards numbered only about five thousand, nine-tenths of them the rawest of raw levies, but they clamoured to be led to meet the enemy ; and Cuesta, a most incapable and conceited old man, would not or dared not refuse them. After this petty combat, which did not cost the French fifty men though it cost the Spaniards some hundreds, Merle resumed his march upon Santander. Owing to want of arms and organisation, the Spaniards made but a feeble defence of the formidable defiles through which he had to pass, and on the 23rd of June June 23. he entered Santander. So far therefore all had gone well with Bessières.

There remained, however, the occupation of Zaragoza and the pacification of Aragon, for the accomplish-

1808. ment of which objects General Lefebvre-Desnoëttes was entrusted with a force of about six thousand men. The province did not contain above fifteen hundred regular Spanish troops, of which two-thirds only belonged to organised corps ; but the Junta had the good sense to choose for itself a young and active commander in Don Joseph Palafox, who in a few weeks raised seven more regiments, each of one thousand men, collected horses for cavalry and artillery, and established factories of muskets and ammunition. On June 8. the 8th of June, after only a fortnight of command, Palafox attempted to check Lefebvre-Desnoëttes with his raw levies, which suffered three several defeats before they finally withdrew into Zaragoza. That city, as had been the case with Valencia, had no regular defences ; and Palafox himself had so little hope of holding the place that he left it, on the very day when Lefebvre came before the walls, to raise a force in Upper Aragon which might harass the French communications. But if Zaragoza had no fortifications, it possessed at least a minor arsenal with a few heavy guns, streets which could be barricaded, and a number of strong buildings, each of which could be turned into a tiny citadel. The population, apparently without any superior direction beyond that of several local leaders, set themselves to turn these advantages to account ; and the French General, by despising his enemy, gave them the encouragement that they needed. On the 15th of June he attempted in the crudest fashion to take the city by storm, and was beaten off with loss so heavy that he was fain to retire to some distance and wait for reinforcements. The besieged bent every nerve to the strengthening of their defences ; and meanwhile Palafox, having collected a motley force, moved forward, as he had designed, upon Lefebvre's communications. He was, however, surprised and routed by a detachment from the besieging army. Thereupon, resolving to attempt no more fighting in the open field, he fetched a wide compass, led the wreck of his followers, about

one thousand men, into Zaragoza, and resumed the 1808. command in person. July 2.

During this interval General Verdier had arrived with eight thousand men and a siege-train, and, being senior to Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, took over the command of the operations. On the very morning of Palafox's arrival Verdier, after a cannonade of forty-eight hours, attempted a second assault, which was repulsed with a loss of five hundred men. He then proceeded to open trenches and prosecute the siege in form ; but he was unable to invest the city completely on both sides of the river, so that its communications with the surrounding country remained always open. On the 4th of August his batteries opened fire, and on the same afternoon he made a third assay to storm Zaragoza. Aug. 4. This time he succeeded in penetrating some way into the town, but was compelled by a counter attack to relinquish a great part of his conquest, though he retained a solid footing within the walls. The fighting was savage, costing the French two thousand killed and wounded ; and for two days the combatants were too much exhausted to resume the contest in earnest. Then came news of the capitulation of Baylen, and on the 14th Verdier destroyed his guns and Aug. 14. ammunition and retired up the Ebro to Tudela. Untrained Spaniards in an unfortified city had actually beaten back seventeen thousand of the conquering French by sheer stubborn resolution to fight till the last. It was a great and memorable feat, worthy of their forefathers at Numantia.

Nor was Zaragoza the only city which emulated the Spanish heroism of former days. A hundred miles to east of it the flame of insurrection had seized upon remote and isolated Catalonia. General Duhesme at Barcelona had been so anxious for the safety of that city that he had been positively relieved to see the Spanish regiments of his garrison desert, in order to swell the insurgent bands of other quarters, instead of joining the populace in an attack upon his own troops.

1808. The Emperor had, it will be remembered, directed Duhesme to detach four thousand troops to second Moncey in Valencia ; he had also ordered him to send four thousand more to reduce the rebellious town of Lerida, and from thence to march upon Zaragoza. Duhesme obeyed ; but he had reckoned without the ancient military organisation of the Catalonian parishes, whereby every man of military age could be called out for defence against an enemy, upon the sounding of the church-bell. The column destined for Lerida, consisting of Swiss and Neapolitan battalions under General Schwartz, had hardly entered the mountains on its march northward when it was checked by a crowd of these parochial levies or *somatenes*,¹ forced to retreat, and harassed until it fairly ran, a mere disorderly mob, into the plains. This mishap so greatly affected Duhesme that he recalled his second column, which had proceeded along the coast as far as Tarragona, lest it should share the fate of the first. Moreover, he was now painfully aware that the whole country was up in arms against him, that his communications with France were severed, and that he would need all his strength to restore them.

Duhesme therefore collected six thousand men and marched north-eastward up the coast upon Gerona, hoping by the capture of that fortress to reopen and keep open the road to Perpignan. Leaving Barcelona on the 17th of June, he was met six miles outside the city by a large body of *somatenes*, whom he dispersed with considerable loss ; and, rapidly advancing, he avenged his previous misfortunes by sacking the town of Mataro.

June 20. On the 20th he arrived before Gerona, a little town of fourteen thousand inhabitants, surrounded by obsolete fortifications, and garrisoned by a single weak battalion of fewer than four hundred men. Having no siege-artillery, Duhesme sent in a flag of truce to summon the place to surrender, and while the parley was proceeding,

¹ *Somatén* seems to be the Catalan equivalent of the French *tocsin*, alarm-bell..

attempted to carry it by storm. Having been beaten back with little difficulty, he waited till dusk, when, June 20. after sending in another flag of truce, he made a second attempt at ten o'clock at night to take the place by escalade. This time his troops made their way into one of the bastions, but were driven out ; and a third attack two hours later was equally unsuccessful. Seeing that the enterprise was hopeless, Duhesme hastily turned about and hurried back by forced marches to Barcelona. His expedition had cost him seven hundred men.

Arrived at Barcelona, he found a swarm of *somatenes* preparing to blockade the town, and was compelled to send out parties against them. This he did twice, once with considerable success, but the second time with ignominious failure. He had already begged reinforcements from the Emperor, who ordered some eight thousand inferior troops of one kind and another to assemble at Perpignan, and set a good officer, General Reille, at their head. Napoleon further gave Reille directions to relieve Figueras, which was closely blockaded by the *somatenes*, and then to advance towards Duhesme, who would move northward to meet him. On the 5th of July Reille marched for July 5. Figueras with fifteen hundred men, and threw supplies and reinforcements into it ; on the news of which, Duhesme started for Gerona with a siege-train and a force of seven thousand men, for a second attempt upon that town. After a slow and trying march, delayed by frequent attacks of the *somatenes* and by uncertainty as to Reille's movements, he came before Gerona on the 22nd, just too late to prevent the entry July 22. of thirteen hundred good Spanish troops into the fortress.

Two days later he was joined by Reille with over July 24. six thousand men, and proceeded to besiege Gerona in form. But the trenches were long in preparation, so that no effective fire could be opened till the 12th Aug. 12. of August ; and meanwhile five thousand Spanish troops from the Balearic islands had landed on the

1808. 23rd of July at Tarragona, and, with the help of the *somatenes* and two British frigates, had closely blockaded Barcelona. The commandant, growing nervous, contrived to send messages to Duhesme, begging for help; but the Marquis del Palacio, who had lately been appointed Captain-general in Catalonia, had no intention of leaving Duhesme in peace. Choosing a daring officer, Brigadier-general Caldagues, he gave him four companies of regular troops, three guns and two thousand raw levies, and sent him up to Gerona, to harass the

Aug. 14. besiegers. By the 14th of August Caldagues was within five miles of Gerona, when he was joined by five thousand *somatenes*; and then in conjunction with two officers, who had contrived to slip out of the fortress, he concerted a plan for a simultaneous attack upon Reille's division by the garrison in front and by

Aug. 16. his own force in rear. On the morning of the 16th the two regular battalions of the garrison made a furious sally, drove the troops in the trenches back on their supports, and captured the siege-guns. Following up their success, they then engaged the main body of the French, when the appearance of Caldagues caused Reille hastily to abandon his positions and retire. That same night Duhesme raised the siege, bidding Reille retreat northward, while he himself withdrew towards Barcelona by the road along the coast. During the march the *somatenes* perpetually harassed his landward flank, while the British frigate *Imperieuse* under Lord Cochrane stood close in shore, whenever opportunity offered, and cannonaded the hapless column from the sea. Tormented beyond endurance, Duhesme at length burned his stores and baggage, threw his guns into the sea, and made for his refuge by rough inland tracks. On the 20th he brought his force into Barcelona, starved, weary, beaten, and demoralised.

Thus on every side Napoleon's strokes had failed; and there would have been little to redeem the general discredit to the French arms had not a fortunate accident delivered into their hands the army of Galicia.

This province, as we have seen, contained a very large proportion of the regular army ; and the local Junta, not without discrimination, had appointed Joachim Blake to command it. Blake was, as his name betrays, of Irish descent, and, though a young General, enjoyed a considerable reputation, which is hardly borne out by his exploits in the field. He possessed, however, energy, some talent for organisation, and a firm hold upon certain sound principles, one of which was, to recruit his regular corps to great strength rather than raise new regiments, and another, not to court defeat by attempting to meet the French upon equal terms in the plain. Leaving therefore his raw levies behind him at their drill, he took up a position with twenty-five thousand of his better troops on the hills which overlook the plain of Leon, so as to block the main roads into Galicia. His purpose was to stand upon the defensive, a policy most agreeable to the local Junta, which, in a truly provincial spirit, considered the safety of Galicia as the most worthy object of a Galician army. Their neighbours in Asturias took precisely the same view with regard to their own levies. They had raised an untrained and undisciplined force of fifteen thousand men, which they scattered in minute detachments along the whole length of their frontier, not realising that to post troops at all points means security at none. However, they were at least determined to wait until the French should come to attack them, which at the time was the soundest of wisdom.

Most unfortunately, Cuesta after his defeat at Cabezon had fallen back to Benavente on the Esla, a place which before long we shall have reason to know better, and was there reorganising his beaten force. Inextinguishable in his conceit, he wished again to try conclusions with the French in the plain, and sent importunate messages to the Juntas of Galicia and Asturias, as well as to Blake, urging them to send their armies forward with him against Valladolid, so as to upset all Napoleon's plans by a raid upon his communi-

1808. cations. With a highly trained army such a stroke, as after events proved, might be telling indeed ; but with a mass of raw recruits and a force of cavalry alike scanty and inefficient, it was madness. The Junta of Asturias, from selfishness rather than foresight, discouraged any such movement, and sent only two battalions to join Cuesta's army. They also suggested that Cuesta would do well to station himself along their southern border, pointing out that from this position he could fall on the flank of any French advance westward, but in secret no doubt hugging themselves over an increase of security for their own gates. The Junta of Galicia was more patriotic and less prudent. In spite of Blake's protests, they ordered him to lead his army to join Cuesta's force, which he met at Villapando, a little to south-east of Benavente, on the 10th of July. There, as was to be expected, the two Generals instantly fell at variance, Cuesta urging immediate attack upon the French, while Blake pleaded for a cautious defensive. Ultimately Cuesta, as senior officer, insisted upon his right to command the entire force, and led it forward to Valladolid ; consenting only, as a concession to Blake, to leave five thousand men at Benavente. The result of this compromise, and of the absence of the Asturian army, was that he could put little more than twenty thousand men instead of forty thousand into the fighting line.

Nothing could better have suited Napoleon. While Blake's army remained in its position on the eastern slopes of the Galician mountains it was a constant menace to his communications, the more formidable because its power and value were unknown. The mere threat of its advance would have sufficed to make any detachment from Bessières's force to eastward extremely hazardous ; and by a series of judicious feints Blake could have kept the Marshal in constant apprehension, while steadily improving the quality of his troops against the day of decisive action. The movement of Cuesta into the plains with little more

than half of the force at his disposal was therefore a ^{1808.} piece of singular good fortune for the Emperor. Neither he nor Savary were unprepared for an offensive movement of the Spaniards from the north-west ; and, upon the first information of Cuesta's advance, reinforcements of the best French troops were hastened up to Burgos both from Madrid and Bayonne. Advancing from Burgos on the 9th of July, and picking up troops ^{July 9.} from Santander and Bayonne at Palencia, Bessières found himself on the 13th at the head of some fourteen ^{July 13.} thousand men, and in contact with the Spaniards at Medina de Rio Seco, about twenty-four miles north-west of Valladolid. His appearance upset the whole of the Spanish plans. Cuesta had designed to make the populous city of Valladolid the centre of his operations, to manœuvre with his flank covered by the Douro, and, if hard pressed, to cross the river and retire by its southern bank upon the Portuguese frontier. His advanced parties were practically touching the walls of Valladolid, when they were hastily recalled to take up a defensive position at Medina de Rio Seco. Bessières had in fact been too quick for his adversaries, and had snatched the initiative from them.

Cuesta's dispositions were characteristic of the man. As if to invite disaster, he first selected ground which gave him no protection for either flank, and then divided his army into two distinct bodies, half of it under Blake on an eminence in advance, the other half under himself in a hollow a mile to the left rear. To make matters worse, Blake occupied his ground with singular want of skill. Bessières, marching early on the morning of the 14th, soon came upon this ^{July 14.} extraordinary line of battle, and quickly made up his mind to keep Cuesta employed by a feint attack while he overwhelmed Blake, and, having done with Blake, to overwhelm Cuesta in his turn. His scheme was fulfilled with uncommon exactness ; though Cuesta, after the defeat of Blake, was able to retire with comparatively little injury. Many of the Spanish regiments fought

1808. with credit, and a few with distinguished gallantry ; July 14. but under such handling as Cuesta's they had no chance, and they were totally routed with the loss of over three thousand men, and of ten out of twenty guns. Bessières forbore to press the pursuit owing to the fatigue of his troops, or he might have inflicted far greater damage ; but the victory was sufficiently complete. Blake and Cuesta met in the evening, and, after an exchange of high words, parted in enmity, Blake leading his men to their old position at Astorga, while Cuesta turned north for Asturias. Bessières, for his part, indulged his troops with the sack of Medina de Rio Seco, with the usual accompaniments of indiscriminate massacre, rape, and pillage, which his Generals made not the slightest effort to prevent.

Thus the army of Galicia was, for the present at any rate, paralysed ; and Napoleon might cease to feel apprehension for his communications. He was able to parade his triumph conspicuously by sending forward his brother to a ceremonial entry into Madrid as King of Spain. The farce of his election to the throne having been completed at Bayonne, Joseph had crossed the frontier on the 9th of July, but had been detained at Burgos owing to the advance of Cuesta. Now he was able to proceed on his way ; and on the 20th he rode solemnly into his new capital. Not a Spaniard was to be seen in the streets, and, except for French July 15. soldiers, Madrid was as a city of the dead. Five days before his arrival Moncey had returned to Madrid July 24. discomfited, and four days after it vague reports were current of a great Spanish victory in Andalusia. On the 28th this news was confirmed ; and on the 1st of August the Intruder, as the Spaniards call him, retired by the great northern road with his court and the twenty thousand troops that were about Madrid. By Aug. 9. the 9th he was at Burgos, where he was joined by Bessières, who, obedient to orders, had abandoned his march westward after the victory of Rio Seco and fallen back. Advanced parties of cavalry were left at Burgos,

but King Joseph and his Court pursued their retreat to 1808. Miranda, withdrawing the mass of the army to north of the Ebro. Napoleon's great plan, compounded with so much lying and trickery, for the subjugation of Spain had been utterly defeated, not indeed with disaster but, an even more fatal matter, with disgrace.

And this, let it never be forgotten, was the work of the Spaniards themselves, before a single British soldier had set foot on Spanish soil. It is very easy to belittle it with the knowledge of later events before us. It is easy to say that the French troops were poor, which was undoubtedly the case, and that Napoleon was not present in person to direct them; but none the less the first repulse of the French in 1808 remains a most grand and glorious achievement. The Spanish nation had been misgoverned for more than a generation, and for sixteen years had been degraded and demoralised by the rule of an imbecile king and an incapable favourite. The army, the navy, the administration, and the finance had all been allowed to go to ruin since 1795. The proud kingdom had been dragged at the heel of France. Her ships had been the prey of Nelson and St. Vincent; her best troops had latterly been forced away to serve Napoleon in the Baltic; a heavy annual subsidy had been wrung from her since 1803 to relieve the treasury of France; and all this in a quarrel that was none of hers. It is small wonder that Napoleon looked upon her as an easy victim; and yet, when his armies spread over Spanish soil, this people, without arms, without leaders, without resources, turned upon them as one man with a terrific unanimity. In truth, by the invasion of Spain Napoleon thrust his troops into an ambush which he had never for a moment dreamed of; and he paid for his temerity by heavy losses. It is probable that the campaign, from the first crossing of the Bidassoa until the retreat to the Ebro, cost him not fewer than forty thousand men permanently lost to the French service. The capitulation of Baylen alone accounted for over twenty

1808. thousand ; and, if it seems an excessive estimate to double that number for the remaining operations, it must be remembered that in 1812 the French reckoned their losses in Spain, for the four years since 1808, at the rate of one hundred men dead every day. Stragglers, estafettes, patrols, and detached parties were killed or captured by hundreds. Even generals did not escape. One at least was taken prisoner while travelling with a small escort, and another was boiled alive or sawn asunder. These barbarities were a misfortune for which the misconduct of the French troops must be held accountable ; but, setting them aside, the spirit in which the Spaniards met invasion was the right one. Every man did his best to make away with every enemy who gave him the opportunity ; and the more enemies he did to death, the better patriot he justly held himself to be. The amenities and conventions of war were made by professional soldiers : a nation insurgent against an aggressive invader knows and should know nothing of them. Spain taught this lesson to Europe ; and, though she is not now reckoned a powerful nation in arms, her example of a century ago is still so vivid that the mightiest of all military nations would hesitate to attack her on her own soil to-day.

Nevertheless the success of Spain in these first tumultuary operations was a snare to her. "It was most lucky," wrote our Minister, Charles Stuart, from Coruña as early as in August 1808, "that the division of the French force kept pace with the division of their opponents. Now they are going to unite, and unless the Spanish unite too, it will not be easy for them to maintain the advantage that they have fortunately gained."¹ Stuart was right, but the Spaniards did not realise how true was his insight. It is now time to see how another nation came forward to help Spain to make good her defects.

¹ Stuart to Canning, No. 16, 7th Aug. 1808.

CHAPTER XIX

BEFORE entering upon the British operations in the 1808. Peninsula it is necessary very briefly to glance at the military resources of the United Kingdom at the opening of 1808. That year, in truth, marks a turning-point no less in the reorganisation of our military forces than in the choice of their sphere of action. In the first place Windham's sanguine expectation, that short service and improved pensions would solve the problem of recruiting the Regular Army, had been wholly disappointed. More recruits had indeed been enlisted since the adoption of Windham's reforms, but the number, though absolutely greater, was not so relatively to the number of enlisting parties employed. Moreover, a large proportion of men had been collected by extraordinary means, Windham having threatened to disband the fifty-four second battalions of the Line unless they were raised to a strength of at least four hundred men within six months. The dread of being placed on half-pay stimulated the officers of these battalions to special exertions and no doubt to extraordinary private expenditure, to fill the empty ranks of their corps. But this was not a practice that could be repeated; nor could it be fairly argued that these recruits had been attracted by the charms of short service. On the other hand, the provision for additional pensions had already augmented the cost of Kilmainham and Chelsea by £200,000 annually, and could not fail to augment it still further. It had also been found impossible to apply accurately the new rules

1808. which granted a man increase of pay after seven years' service, and which ordained that two years in the East or West Indies should count as three. Lastly, there remained the formidable difficulty that, of two hundred and four thousand rank and file in the Regular Army, seventy thousand had been engaged for short service; and that one half of these, enlisted during the previous twelve months, would be discharged in seven years. In other words, limited service would not make good its own waste. Castlereagh therefore inserted and carried a clause in the Mutiny Act giving men the option of enlisting for limited service or for life, so as to preserve all that might be good in Windham's scheme, while correcting as far as possible what was amiss.

But far more valuable than this comparatively small, though important, change were the measures introduced by Castlereagh for establishing the whole of the military forces upon a sound, coherent, and permanent basis. His original scheme was to keep one hundred thousand volunteers only, raised almost exclusively in large towns and populous districts, and to impose on them conditions which would ensure at once their cheapness and efficiency; to create two hundred thousand Local Militia, who should be exercised for one month annually, but should not leave their counties except in case of invasion or rebellion; and lastly, to train under Windham's Act two hundred thousand men, and to make them liable to serve in the Line in the event of invasion.

These last were to be the foundation of all, for only by preliminary instruction could twenty-eight days of annual exercise suffice to make the Local Militiamen efficient; and in order to ensure that this preliminary instruction should be thorough, Castlereagh aimed at nothing less than national training. His idea was that every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and thirty should be compelled, as a national duty, to learn the use of arms under penalty of a fine, and that the State,

while defraying the cost of instruction, should allow 1808. no pay to its pupils for attendance at drill. The instructors were to be drawn from among the sergeants of the Local Militia, who were to receive five shillings for every man certified by competent inspectors to be perfected in the use of the firelock. Men so certified were to be exempt from further drill for three years, after which they would be required once more to prove their efficiency, and renew their certificate. Men without certificates were to be mustered every six months in their parishes, and, if found inefficient, were to be fined ten shillings, with a cumulative increase of ten shillings more half-yearly, until they should have satisfied the inspector. If, argued Castlereagh, men found that they must, under penalties, train themselves to arms, they would soon organise themselves to that end for their own convenience.

From the men thus trained, all, it must be noted, between the ages of eighteen and thirty, the Local Militia was to be drawn by annual ballot. Local Militiamen were to serve for three years, after which they were to be exempt until their turn came round in rotation. Ballotted men were to be allowed to find a substitute; but such substitutes were also to be trained men of the military age; and, if they were ballotted during the period of their service as substitutes, they were to proceed with their three years' service as principals, at the conclusion of their term as substitutes. The entire force was to be organised in battalions of one thousand rank and file apiece; and at every ballot there were to be drawn a certain quantity of supplementary men, over and above the numbers required to complete the establishment, who were to be liable to fill vacancies according to the order in which they were drawn.

So much for the Local Militia, which, however, was not altogether to supersede the Regular Militia. This latter was to be maintained as before by balloting men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, and was to

1808. be practically a part of the Regular Army, designed at once to form the first line for Internal Defence, and a recruiting dépôt for the regular battalions abroad. Here was, indeed, the weak point of the scheme. The Regular Militia was thereby converted into a nondescript force, liable to be robbed of its old soldiers by the Regular Army, and of its recruits by the Local Militia ; while, though to all intent a part of the Regular Army, it was still left under the jurisdiction of the Home Office. We shall see in due time that such a situation was too intolerable to be long endured with patience.

Passing finally to the Regular Army itself, Castlereagh hoped to keep its ranks filled from three different services ; first, by ordinary recruiting ; secondly, by volunteers from the Local Militia ; and thirdly, by the establishment of a school, where boys should pass two or three years in education and should then be attached to regiments for a term of seven years, which would be reckoned from their attainment of the age of eighteen. Altogether Castlereagh counted that his scheme would give him a total land-force of over a million men trained to arms.¹

Unfortunately the changes contemplated by this plan were too far-reaching to be accepted. However, an Act was successfully passed, upon the lines sketched by Castlereagh, for the creation of a Local Militia, which was not to exceed three hundred and nine thousand men in Great Britain. Men between the ages of eighteen and thirty only were to be allotted for this force, and no substitution of any kind was to be permitted, though exemption could be purchased by

¹ Army and Regular Militia	.	.	.	.	350,000
Volunteers (Great Britain)	.	.	.	.	100,000
Volunteers (Ireland)	.	.	.	.	80,000
Sedentary Militia (Great Britain)	.	.	.	.	200,000
Trained Men	.	.	.	.	400,000
					<hr/>
					<u>1,130,000</u>

a fine of £10 to £30, according to a man's means. 1808. Encouragement was given to Volunteer corps to convert themselves bodily into Local Militia; and it was ordained that Local Militiamen might enlist, except during the annual twenty-eight days of training, into the Army, Navy, Marines, or Regular Militia. Simultaneously orders were issued for making a summary end of all inefficient corps of Volunteers. The result was that within nine months the Volunteers at large had in great measure disappeared, to make way for a force of nearly two hundred thousand Local Militia. To put the matter more crudely, two hundred thousand men, who could be compelled to undergo training and to do what they were told, were substituted for an uncertain number who, after great expense to the country, still claimed the glorious privilege of doing as they pleased. The gain to the security of the country was enormous; and, as a natural consequence, a larger proportion of the Regular Army was released for service beyond sea.

Moreover, the strength of the Regular Army, thanks to the heroic measures of Castlereagh, was great beyond all parallel in its history. In the course of 1807 and the first three months of 1808 there had been raised in all forty-five thousand recruits; and, since the casualties of 1807 fell below fifteen thousand, there was a solid gain of thirty thousand men. Ministers were naturally and rightly anxious to turn such an increase of force to account; but there was reason to fear lest they should employ it unprofitably from too hasty solicitude to employ it at once. We have seen that they already had begun to fritter it away in small detachments by sending part of it to Sweden with Moore on an extremely foolish errand, and another part of it to Gibraltar under Spencer, with wild notions of a surprise of Ceuta and a raid upon Minorca; while at the back of these schemes floated visions of a great attack upon the Spanish colonies in South America. Fortunately the visit of the Deputies from

1808. Asturias intervened to bring these vague and uncertain projects to an end, in favour of concentrated effort upon a single point. The Junta of Asturias practically threw itself into the arms of Great Britain, inviting her help, and undertaking to conclude with her such treaties as were necessary for an efficient alliance. Such a declaration was not unwelcome to the British Government. Ministers perceived at once that this was a national movement, from which a fortunate accident had removed the encumbrance, proved to be so fatal at Naples, of a Royal Family. They did not neglect the opportunity. The cause of Spain commended itself not less to the Opposition ; for Napoleon's treachery at Bayonne gave them an excuse for turning against him and indulging in sentimental phrases about the liberation of mankind. From the first therefore it may be said that England warmly embraced the cause of the Spanish patriots.

By the judicious behaviour of General Sir Hew Dalrymple, the Governor of Gibraltar, it so happened that England's friendly intentions became known to the Spaniards some time before the arrival of the Asturian deputies. Ever since his arrival at the Rock in November 1806, Sir Hew had been in confidential communication with General Castaños, who commanded the Spanish troops in the adjacent parts of Andalusia. After Napoleon's invasion of Spain the intercourse between the two became still closer ; and less than a week after the revolt of Madrid on the 2nd of May, Castaños made private overtures to Sir Hew, which by the end of the month had ripened into official proposals of amity, offered by the Junta of Seville. Simultaneously came eager applications to Dalrymple from several quarters in Spain for arms and ammunition. With these he complied so far as his limited means permitted, using his influence at the same time to raise a small loan, without premium or interest, for the Junta of Seville.

Furthermore Dalrymple promised that Spencer's

force and the squadron of Admiral Purvis off Cadiz 1808. should give any assistance within their power; and after some hesitation the authorities at Cadiz invited the two commanders to a conference with the Spanish General and Admiral in the city. There it was decided that immediate preparations should be made for attack upon the French squadron which lay in the harbour; for which operation the Spaniards accepted the aid of Purvis's ships, but refused the help of Spencer's regiments to serve in the batteries. Hints were thrown out to Spencer that his four battalions would be welcome at Seville, where no doubt Castaños hoped to take him under his own command; but not knowing the intentions of the British Government, Spencer wisely decided not to march into the interior, though he held himself ready to garrison Cadiz if requested. Cadiz, however, was the last place where the Spaniards wanted British troops. They were morbidly jealous of admitting them, owing to an utterly unfounded notion that the redcoats, if once they obtained a footing in the famous port, would make it go the way of Gibraltar. In spite of their previous invitation of British help, they refused the aid of the British squadron as well as of British troops when they finally attacked and captured the French ships; and finally they suggested to Spencer that he June 9-14. should march to Xeres, or sail to Ayamonte, at the mouth of the Guadiana, where a French corps was reported to be in the vicinity. In fact they were content that he should go anywhere rather than stay near Cadiz.

To Ayamonte accordingly Spencer sailed, with a June 12. force now raised to over five thousand of all ranks,¹ where his appearance contributed not a little to turn back a corps of four thousand French under General Avril, who had received orders from Junot to join Dupont at Seville. He was able also to distribute a

¹ He had been joined by 1/6th from Gibraltar, and by missing fragments of his four remaining regiments from Sicily. *Return of 19th June* in Spencer to Sec. of State, 24th June 1808.

1808. few arms to some Spanish soldiers who had escaped from French custody, and were marching to Ayamonte to cut off some French posts in the vicinity. Proceeding to the Tagus for a short conference with Admiral Cotton, Spencer next turned eastward to Puerto de Santa Maria at the head of the Bay of Cadiz, where, in deference to the request of Castaños, he landed and sent to Xeres three battalions and four light companies. Spencer had now been for two entire months of a most critical period without a word of any kind from

July 15. Ministers to guide his conduct. On the 15th of July he at last received an intimation that a force under Sir Arthur Wellesley was about to sail from Cork in order to act "as circumstances might point out" in support of the efforts of the Spanish nation, and that he himself was to await Wellesley's orders at Cadiz, though not to the prejudice of any operation in which he might be engaged at the moment. Remaining, therefore, at Puerto de Santa Maria for a week, until assured that the

July 22. surrender of Dupont was certain, he sailed on the 22nd to join his force to Wellesley's. Further orders, to seek for Sir Arthur in the Tagus at once, did not reach him until his own sound judgment had directed him to the exact spot where Ministers wished him to be.¹

While Spencer had thus been wandering backwards and forwards along the south coast of Spain, furthering the cause of the patriots so far as he dared, the British Ministers had finally made up their minds to act. For some time past a force of about five thousand men had been assembled at Cork under orders for embarkation, with a view to an attack on the Spanish colonies; but at the end of May Sir Arthur Wellesley, upon hearing the news of the rising in Spain, recommended that the entire force at the disposal of Ministers should be sent out at once to join Spencer's detachment off the coast of Spain, in readiness to take advantage of any

¹ W.O.I. 226; Spencer to Sec. of State, 6th, 10th, 12th, 17th, 21st, 24th, 26th, 30th June, 3rd, 13th, 15th, 22nd July; Sec. of State to Spencer, 28th, 30th June, 10th August 1808.

possible opportunity.¹ On the 3rd and 7th of June the Commander-in-chief was directed to increase this force to eight thousand men, exclusive of one regiment of cavalry and of all artillery ; and to appoint a staff which should suffice for it when increased by the addition of Spencer's detachment. A day or two later it was known that Sir Arthur Wellesley had been chosen to command it ; and on the 14th of June that General June 14. received his letter of service. It was evidently the first idea of Ministers to send him to Cadiz, but the latest reports received from Dalrymple were not encouraging as to the activity of the Spaniards in that quarter ; and for the present Wellesley received no instructions. The delay, however, was of small importance ; for, although the troops had been held ready for embarkation for months, their equipment for the field was still very far from complete. Moreover, it was intended to send with them several thousand stand of arms for the benefit of the insurgents.²

But at the end of June came news that Portugal, following the example of Spain, had also risen in rebellion. On the 6th of the month a Junta of June 6. insurrection had been appointed at Oporto, which ten days later took the title of Supreme Junta of the Kingdom. By the 16th the revolt had spread to June 16. Algarve, where, as we have seen, Spencer was able to give support to it. The movement soon spread to Lisbon, where it was only checked by the presence of Junot with the largest part of his army ; and by the 25th the rising had become general and so formidable June 25. that Junot put it to a Council of War whether he should evacuate Portugal and retire on Madrid, or abandon the north and south only, concentrating his whole force about Lisbon. The latter course was that selected ; and towards the end of June operations for putting

¹ *Well. Suppl. Desp.* vi. 80. This memorandum is undated, but was evidently written in May.

² Castlereagh to Com.-in-chief, 3rd, 7th June ; to M.G. Ordnance, 16th June ; *Well. Desp.* iv. 10, 11.

1808. down the insurgents in Central Portugal were in full play. These facts, together with the requests of the Asturian deputies that Britain should make a diversion in their favour in Portugal, decided Ministers to aim at the expulsion of the French from that country as their June. first object ; and on the 30th of June Wellesley received his instructions accordingly. Since the Government's information as to the strength of the French was uncertain, Sir Arthur was to go forward to Coruña to ascertain the state of affairs both in Spain and Portugal ; and, if he judged himself strong enough, when joined by Spencer's corps, to begin operations at once, he was authorised to do so. If not, he was to wait, with permission of the Galician Junta, at Vigo, until ten thousand additional men could join him from England.

Throughout the later days of June and the early days of July the preparations for Wellesley's expedition went forward rapidly, the General looking personally to every detail. He was not exempt from vexatious difficulties, such as were inseparable from the vicious organisation which placed the infantry and cavalry under the Commander-in-chief, the artillery under the Board of Ordnance, and the Commissariat under the Treasury. The armament having been designed in the first place for South America, and in the second to wait upon circumstances on the west coast of Spain, the Board of Ordnance had taken no steps to provide the artillery with horses. The Horse Guards had, however, organised two troops of a small Waggon-train, drawn by horses cast from the cavalry, for service in Ireland only, evidently with the object of enabling any small column for the repression of disturbances in that island to be immediately mobilised. The horses of this Waggon-train were made over to the artillery of Wellesley's army ; but the General, not content with this, desired to take their drivers and officers also for the general service of his transport. There was no difficulty in persuading both officers and men to alter the terms of their engagement, which bound them to

serve in Ireland only, and to accept foreign service ; 1808. but the Commander-in-chief, naturally desiring to recreate the Irish Waggon-train, was unwilling to let the officers go, though ready to part with the men. The drivers thereupon declared that they would not embark without their officers ; and Wellesley wrote with some heat to Castlereagh to protest that he did not know for what purpose horses and drivers were kept at all, if not to draw guns and take charge of waggons on active service. On Castlereagh's representation, the Duke of York at once removed all difficulties, by giving commissions to the officers and adding the two troops in question to the establishment of the Royal Waggon-train. Thus Wellesley was enabled to assure himself of some facilities, at any rate, for the organisation of a proper transport-service ; and it is worthy of remark that he should so early have realised that the main difficulties of a campaign in the Peninsula would be those of transport and supply.

Meanwhile it was inevitable that the actual means of carriage must be obtained upon the spot. Since, however, the place and time of disembarkation were still unknown, and the expedition was intended to start on the earliest possible day, it was impossible to send skilled officers in advance of the army to collect draught-animals and vehicles. It was equally out of the question to send those animals and vehicles with the army from England. In the first place, it was uncertain whether the force would be landed immediately upon its arrival on the coast of Portugal, or would be detained on board the transports for weeks or months ; it was equally uncertain, in the second place, whether the troops would find any proper spot for disembarkation, or be compelled to land through the surf ; and thirdly, in those days of small ships and indefinite voyages, the conveyance of a sufficient military train for an army of seventeen thousand men—the number that fought at Vimeiro—would have been absolutely out of the question.

1808. Calculating the vehicles required at no more than five hundred and the horses at four thousand, the number of horse-transports at the Government's disposal was so small that the vessels must have made two or three journeys to Portugal and back before the full number of animals could have been delivered at their destination. Again, the horses when landed would not have been fit for immediate work, to say nothing of the mortality among them on the voyage; and thus the inception of the operations must have been delayed for weeks and months. Wellesley, therefore, took with him only four vehicles, besides the ammunition-waggons and forge-carts of the artillery, and horses sufficient only to draw the guns and ammunition-waggons and to mount two squadrons of cavalry. The total number of animals, including the chargers of mounted officers, fell below six hundred; yet even so they filled, together with a thousand dragoons and artillery-men, no fewer than twenty-one vessels with an aggregate burden of six thousand tons.¹

¹ The actual number of horses was for Staff, 34; for artillery, 306; for cavalry, 224; total, 564. The artillery-men and dragoons numbered 1063. The vehicles consisted of 18 gun-carriages, 18 ammunition-waggons, 4 camp-equipment waggons, and 3 forge-carts.

Mr. Oman, *History of the Peninsular War*, i. 225, 231, in a hasty allusion to this question of transport, has fallen into some slight errors of detail. He says that the Irish Waggon-train took their waggons with them, which they did not; he omits to mention the fact that its horses were taken for the guns, and the reason for it; he blames the Government for not providing the army with land-transport, and he adds, "Such little *contres* were common in the days when the Duke of York, with the occasional assistance of Mrs. Mary Ann Clark, managed the British Army." He has manifestly forgotten that the Commander-in-chief had no control over either the Artillery or the Commissariat; and that, but for the much-abused Duke of York, who created the Waggon-train in 1799, and maintained it in the teeth of bitter opposition in Parliament, there would have been no organisation for transport at all. Napoleon himself had no military train until 1807, having depended until then wholly upon private enterprise for his transport, so that the Duke of York anticipated him by eight years. To drag in the name of Mrs. Clark in order to colour such superficial criticism of a Commander-in-chief who, with all his faults, did incalculable

After some delay through foul winds, the armament 1808. sailed from Cork on the 13th of July, Wellesley himself July 13. having started on the previous day in a frigate for Coruña.¹ He was hardly out of sight of the British coast before the Government decided to enlarge the scale of the expedition very considerably. On the 15th July 15. of July Castlereagh wrote to Wellesley to inform him that a reinforcement of some five thousand men, under Brigadiers Acland and Anstruther, would be despatched from Ramsgate and Harwich at once, and that eleven thousand more under Sir John Moore, just returned from the Baltic, would follow them as soon as possible. The "attack upon the Tagus" was still prescribed as the first object; and any troops that could be spared from that enterprise were to be detached to the southward, either good service to the Army, is surely unworthy of so able and serious a historian.

Upon the whole question of the despatch of horses for this expedition, see *Well. Suppl. Desp.* vi. 83-87; *Well. Desp.* iv. 21; *Castlereagh Desp.*; *Parl. Papers*, 1809.

Wellesley's force, including the reinforcements which arrived before Vimeiro, if fitted with transport according to the modern scale for mobilisation, would have required between four and five thousand horses and six hundred vehicles. The expense of fitting transports for them, unless they were to consume several months in crossing the sea, would have been prohibitive.

¹ Embarkation Return (*Well. Desp.* iv. 27), 13th July 1808:—

R.E.	6 officers	12 N.C.O.s and men.	
R.A. . . .	13	359	"
R.A. Drivers .	1	49	"
20th L.D. .	13	368	" and 215 horses
1/5th Foot .	46	1061	"
1/9th "	39	1022	"
1/36th "	43	660	"
1/38th "	47	1032	"
1/40th "	47	993	"
1/45th "	34	560	"
5/60th Foot .	33	1006	"
1/71st .	38	946	"
1/91st .	40	978	"
2/95th 4 cos. .	19	427	"
4th R. Vet. batt.	25	811	"
<hr/> Total	<hr/> <u>444</u>	<hr/> <u>10,284</u>	"

1808. to secure Cadiz, if it should be threatened by Dupont, or to aid the Spaniards in “ reducing Dupont’s corps,” or to work with them in any other concerted operations. The whole force, thus raised to over thirty thousand men, was to be entrusted to the supreme command of Sir Hew Dalrymple, with Sir Harry Burrard for his second. Since Moore likewise was to sail with the reinforcements, the immediate result of these changes was that three officers senior to Wellesley would presently arrive in Portugal.¹

It is melancholy to be obliged to record that this extraordinary and fatal arrangement was due wholly to a quarrel between the Government and the Horse Guards respecting the merits of Moore. The circumstances in which that officer returned from Sweden have already been narrated ; and it has been shown that, in withdrawing his army from that country, he had done the only thing possible to correct a great blunder on the part of the Ministry, and had, in fact, simply anticipated their orders. Nevertheless it is certain that, though Castlereagh was loyal to Moore, the Government as a body, and Canning in particular, disliked him. In Sicily the diplomatic agents and the military commanders, among which latter Moore had been the most prominent, had taken diametrically opposite views as to the good faith of the Court of Palermo. Events proved that the Generals were absolutely right and the diplomatists hopelessly wrong ; but this did not the more endear the military chiefs to the Foreign Office. Again, in Sweden Moore’s despatches proved that he had been sent upon a fool’s errand ; and the burden of this mistake, once more, lay upon the Foreign Office, which was fully equipped with information as to the disordered brain of the King of Sweden. Diplomatists, however, complained of Moore’s haughty demeanour towards those miracles of falsity, the Neapolitan Bourbons ; and the gossip of Stockholm, in entire ignorance of the true facts, made the like criticism of his bearing towards Gustavus of Sweden.

¹ *Well. Desp.* iv. pp. 27-34.

Thus Moore came to be regarded by Ministers as 1808, possibly an able soldier, but certainly as a man of tactless, unconciliatory, and overbearing manners.

Personal prejudice and political differences, as usual, contributed not a little to the formation of this opinion in the Cabinet. If Moore were right about Sicily and Sweden, then obviously the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who should have been fully acquainted with the truth about both Courts, had shown misjudgment, almost amounting to folly, in the policy which he had prescribed towards them. Now Canning was the last man to sit down easily under an imputation of folly, least of all from such an one as Moore. This Minister, to the superficial observer, was the most striking figure in the Government, a devoted follower of Pitt, very able, very brilliant, full of wit and fancy, but also very vain, very egoistic, and not quite straightforward. The General's political sympathies, so far as they were known, were with the Opposition; and he had little respect for the military policy either of Pitt or of his successors. Where that policy had been successful, in Corsica, in the West Indies, in North Holland, and in Egypt, or where it had been prevented from leading to disaster, as in Sicily and in Sweden, the credit belonged chiefly, though it was not in his nature to parade the fact, to Moore himself. Sir John set little value on fine speeches, for he was a man not of words but of deeds; his ability in great affairs, though different in kind from Canning's, was very considerable, for he possessed insight, prescience, and a firm hold upon facts, while his experience of men and things in all parts of the world was incomparably greater than that of Canning. Again, he was a man who worked wholly for his country, whose sense of honour and rectitude was so keen that any taint of intrigue or of charlatanism was loathsome to him, and whose fearlessness was proportioned to his integrity. Finally, he possessed as his principal failings a keen critical faculty and an excessive readiness of contempt which, though finding their chief vent in

1808. his private journal, were never even in his official writings wholly repressed. One can conceive of no character which would be more antipathetic to such a man as Canning.

Thus there was in the Cabinet at least one strong influence against Moore, which demonstrably was not without effect upon the Minister for War ; and Castlereagh had further his own reasons for wishing to be quit of Moore. He had, to his infinite credit, perceived the great ability of Wellesley, and knew that a soldier who, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, was practically one of themselves, would be acceptable to his colleagues. There can be little doubt but that Castlereagh hoped and intended that Wellesley should be Commander-in-chief of all the forces sent to Portugal. But here the Duke of York intervened, with the full support of the King. The Duke knew the worth of Sir John ; and though probably he did not credit the gossip, current in the Army, that Moore had been sent to Stockholm in order to remove him to a convenient distance, yet he was convinced that the General had been unfairly treated. He was therefore not disposed to allow a senior officer of tried ability and merit, and of great experience in European warfare, to be set aside in favour of one whose reputation had been won against native levies in India, who was not yet forty years of age, and who was low on the list of Lieutenant-generals.

To trace accurately the course of the intrigues that accompanied this dispute between Ministry and Commander-in-chief is, with the materials at command, impossible ; but it seems to have run somewhat as follows. The Ministers were resolute that Moore should not command in Portugal ; but, having no pretext for actually depriving him of the command of the troops which he had brought back from Sweden, determined to appoint an officer senior to him to take them out to the Peninsula, in the expectation that he would resign in disgust. Their choice fell upon Sir

Hew Dalrymple, for they reckoned that the ability 1808. which he had shown in dealing with the Spanish patriots would commend him to the nation, while the facts that Sir Hew was a Guardsman and high up on the list of Lieutenant-generals would make him acceptable to the King. Castlereagh, however, very clumsily revealed the fact that Wellesley was the favourite of Ministers, first, by making Dalrymple's appointment only temporary, secondly, by commanding Wellesley to Dalrymple's particular confidence, and hinting, with unmistakable breadth, that the Cabinet expected "the most prominent use" to be made of his services. Evidently the Cabinet's design was to enable Wellesley to increase his reputation as soon as possible, in order that, as soon as his name had become known to the public, Dalrymple might return to Gibraltar, and Wellesley might take his place as Commander-in-chief.¹

There still remained the danger that Moore, being senior to Wellesley, would naturally succeed to the command, if anything should happen to Dalrymple before Sir Arthur had found his opportunity of gaining distinction. Ministers overcame this difficulty by appointing another General, senior to Moore, as Dalrymple's second-in-command. The officer selected was Sir Harry Burrard, probably through the influence of the Duke of York; for Burrard belonged to the Duke's own regiment, the Coldstream Guards, and was further no self-seeker, a gentleman in the truest sense of the term, and a sincere admirer of Moore. It was likely that Moore would feel his supersession less bitterly if he were supplanted by an officer who was full of tact and consideration, and who, moreover, would probably be content to be governed by his influence. It is significant that the whole of these arrangements received their irrevocable sanction on the very day when Moore arrived July 15. at Yarmouth, a fact which points to the certainty that the Cabinet was resolved not to hear what he had

¹ W.O. vi. 46: Castlereagh to Dalrymple, 15th July 1808; and see second letter of same date in *Well. Desp.* iv. 30.

1808. to say for himself before it passed judgment upon him.

On reporting the return of his force Moore was at once summoned to London, where, on the next day, being Sunday, though unable to see Castlereagh, he learned from the Military Secretary of all the intrigues that had been going forward. On the morrow he waited upon Castlereagh, who gave him to understand that his conduct in Sweden as a whole had been perfectly satisfactory to the Government, though there was some difference of opinion among Ministers as to the propriety of his escaping from Stockholm in disguise. The Minister then dismissed him with the warning that he would have more to say to him on the next day.

At this second interview Castlereagh, too much embarrassed, if not indeed ashamed, to inform Moore outright that he was superseded, gave him to understand by inference that such was the case. Moore indignantly asked what he had done to be treated so unworthily. Ministers had approved of his behaviour in chief command in Sweden ; yet, now that his troops were ordered to Portugal, two officers, of far less experience and distinction than himself, had been placed over his head. No doubt Ministers had a right to employ what officers they pleased, and he himself would have no right to complain if they had appointed the youngest General in the Army to this command ; but officers who had served with zeal and without jealousy of others were entitled at least to be handled with some consideration. "Had I been an ensign," he said, "it would hardly have been possible to treat me with less ceremony." Castlereagh answered feebly that he was not sensible of having given any cause for complaint ; and Moore, abruptly rising, took his leave.¹ It was

¹ Maurice's *Diary of Sir John Moore*, pp. 239-241. I have grave doubts about the story, told in Stapleton's *George Canning and his Times*, that Moore reopened the door and said, "Remember, my Lord, I protest against the expedition, and foretell its failure." Moore, who records the circumstances of the interview fully in his

doubtless expected that the General would resign his command at once; for it seems that Lord Chatham had actually been selected to succeed him.¹ Moore, however, returned at once to Portsmouth and gave himself up wholly to preparation for the voyage of his troops to Portugal.

On the 21st of July Burrard's letter of service was sent to him, intimating that, as Dalrymple could not arrive before him, he was to execute the instructions given to Wellesley; and on the same day orders were despatched to Moore to sail for the Tagus as soon as his transports were victualled and his troops ready, and there to place himself under Burrard's command until the arrival of Dalrymple. On the 22nd Castle-
July 22. reagh wrote a final letter to Moore, saying that, if the military arrangements had not been so far advanced, Ministers would, in consequence of his complaints, have advised the King to relieve him of his command; and that they intended in any case to report to the King his behaviour, together with their own opinion upon it. This was very obviously a pressing invitation for Moore to resign; and, coming as it did nearly a week after the General's interview with Castlereagh, it was an exceedingly unwise and undignified proceeding. If Ministers desired to report his conduct to the King, they had had plenty of time to do so; and, if they wished to deprive him of his

journal, says nothing of it; and it is most unlikely that he would have omitted the incident if it had occurred. Moreover, Canning's comment upon the remark at the time, as handed down by himself to Stapleton, is, as General Maurice has shown, so utterly absurd, that I am inclined to treat the entire story as due to a freak of memory, such as may afflict us all, on the part of Canning or of Stapleton, or of both. Moore's silence in his journal also would outweigh such poor evidence as Stapleton's recollection of Canning's recollection of Castlereagh's recollection of Moore's words; even if the story were not in itself improbable and Canning had been less tricky and more veracious than he was.

¹ Charles Stewart in a letter to his brother Castlereagh of 15th July speaks of Lord Chatham as though he had already been appointed to the command of Moore's troops. *Londonderry MS.*

1808. command, it was absurd to plead the advanced stage of the preparations against such a step, for Burrard was at hand, ready to take Moore's place, and indeed with nothing else to do. The delay in addressing this communication to Moore was probably due to Castlereagh's reluctance to send any such letter. Indeed the wording of the document favours the conjecture that it was composed by Canning and forced upon the Minister for War by the Cabinet under Canning's inspiration. Possibly Canning in his turn may have been incensed by the organisation of the Army for Portugal as outlined by the Horse Guards, whereby Moore very properly received command of the Reserve, consisting of seven light battalions and three regiments of light cavalry, which were the flower of the force. Be that as it may, the letter was written ; and Moore, seizing the opportunity, wrote a dignified answer expressing his pleasure that his conduct was to be reported to the King, since he had perfect confidence in His Majesty's justice. With this palpable hit, for which Ministers had only themselves to thank, Moore allowed

July 24. the quarrel to end. On the following day Burrard arrived at Portsmouth, and having taken over the command, embarked on the same ship with Moore for the Tagus.

I have dwelt at length upon this episode of the command in Portugal, because the machinations of the Ministers, or of a section among them, recoiled upon their own heads with infinite damage to themselves, to their country, and to every one concerned. The reputation of two out of the three Commanders-in-chief appointed by them was ruined, and that of the third, whose disgrace would have been a national disaster, was very seriously endangered. The mischief of the whole matter lay not in the preference of Ministers for Wellesley over Moore. There they were perfectly within their rights. To judge by what was known of the two men, Moore was decidedly the superior General ; and so far the Government was wrong not to appoint him, for a

campaign or two under Moore would have done 1808. Wellesley more good than harm. The two men held each other in genuine admiration ; and there was not a little that the younger man might have learned from his elder. Still, if Ministers considered that Wellesley was at all events quite equal to the command, and was likely to work more cordially with them than Moore would have done, they would have been perfectly justified in discarding Moore to make way for Wellesley, for hearty co-operation between General and Cabinet is of the first importance. But this they should have done openly and straightforwardly ; instead of which they descended to petty annoyances, hoping to torment Moore into sacrificing himself, because they had not the courage to sacrifice him. The trick is a common one, and the Cabinet of 1808 was not the first nor the last to practise it. Naturally, however, Sir John was much hurt ; and the action of Ministers was not only undignified but unpatriotic, for, if Wellesley had been killed in his first battle, they would have been compelled to appoint in his place the very man whom they had injured and offended. The root of the whole trouble, as of the majority of human troubles, lay in moral cowardice. Ministers knew that Moore was regarded both by the nation and the Army as the ablest of English Generals ; and they were not brave enough to affront public opinion. The inevitable inference is that they knew their cause to be a bad one. As shall now be told, they were unfortunate enough to be overtaken by retribution within a few weeks ; and it can only be said that they thoroughly deserved their fate.

CHAPTER XX

1808. WHILE Ministers were wrangling with Moore, Wellesley July 20. had arrived on the 20th of July at Coruña. Conferring there with the Junta of Galicia, he obtained permission to anchor his transports and even to land his troops at Vigo, if necessary ; but he could gather none but the vaguest and least trustworthy of information. The Galicians admitted a defeat at Medina de Rio Seco, but attributed to the French a loss of seven thousand men. For the rest they reported the destruction of French detachments in several quarters, and the surrender of Dupont on the 24th of June, though as a matter of fact he did not capitulate until the 20th of July. As to the future, they declared themselves able to put any number of men into the field ; and, though they wanted arms and money, they were disinclined to receive British troops. With regard to Portugal, they stated the French force in that country at fifteen thousand, and added the one piece of useful information which Wellesley obtained from them, that Northern Portugal was in full revolt against the French.

In these circumstances, Wellesley left Coruña on July 21. the 21st and proceeded to Oporto, where on the 24th July 24. he waited on the Bishop and the Supreme Junta. These gentlemen confirmed the news of the Portuguese insurrection ; but they complained that, though the people were willing to fight, there were no arms for them ; and they did not conceal their alarm at the defeat of the whole Galician army at Rio Seco. As to troops, they had organised about five thousand men,

one thousand of whom were armed with muskets 1808. supplied by the British fleet, and the rest with anything that they could find ; there were also twelve thousand new levies. Altogether the reports of the Junta were not encouraging. On the other hand, Admiral Sir Charles Cotton had written from the Tagus that the fort of Figueira, which covered Mondego Bay, had been placed in his hands by the Portuguese insurgents, and garrisoned by him with four hundred British Marines ; so that one landing-place at any rate was assured to Wellesley. After obtaining a promise, therefore, from the Bishop of Oporto to furnish one hundred and fifty horses for his cavalry, and five hundred mules for his transport, in the event of disembarkation, Wellesley directed the troops to prepare for a landing at Mondego Bay, and on the 25th sailed to the Tagus to consult July 25. Cotton.

Here he received letters from Spencer at Puerto de Santa Maria, enclosing valuable information as to the strength of the French army in Portugal, which that officer had gathered during his visit to the Tagus in June.¹ These Wellesley answered by summoning Spencer to join him forthwith ; and, after discussing various places of disembarkation with Cotton, he determined finally upon Mondego Bay. The news of Dupont's defeat at Baylen gave him every reason to hope that Spencer would leave Cadiz and seek him out at once ; wherefore, quitting the Tagus on the 27th, he sailed back to the Mondego. Arriving there on the 30th he July 30. learned not only that five thousand additional troops were actually on their way to join him, but also that ten thousand more would sail very shortly, and with them three officers senior to himself. He answered to the effect that he exonerated Castlereagh from all responsibility for his supersession. Moore, curiously enough, had in like manner exonerated the Duke of York from any neglect towards himself. Again, in

¹ Printed in *Evidence of Court of Enquiry on the Convention of Cintra*, pp. 295-301.

1808. reply to Castlereagh's last and most unfriendly letter, Moore had written "that he was about to proceed on the duty to which he had been ordered, and should endeavour to acquit himself with the same zeal that he had always shown in his country's service." So likewise Wellesley now wrote, as became a soldier, "that whatever might happen he would do his best, and would not unduly hurry forward the operations in order to secure the merit of their success."¹

Meanwhile Wellesley's information as to the strength and disposition of Junot's force was still imperfect. Spencer had estimated the strength at over twenty thousand, but Wellesley persisted in treating this as an exaggeration, and in taking the figure as eighteen thousand ; whereas in reality it was twenty-six thousand. Moreover, Junot, pursuant to the resolution of his council of war, had drawn in all his outlying garrisons, except those at Almeida and Elvas, and had concentrated the bulk of his force about Lisbon, with no more distant detachments than at Peniche to north and Setubal to south-east of the capital.

July 25. From this centre on the 25th he had despatched General Loison with seven thousand men to march on Elvas by way of Evora, the seat of the insur-

July 29. rectionary Junta of Alemtejo. Here on the 29th Loison defeated with merciless slaughter a small body of insurgents which had the temerity to face him ; and having sacked Evora, pursued his way northwards. Wellesley had certain intelligence of Loison's march, but no very accurate reports as to the extent of the insurrection in Alemtejo. However, since he reckoned the whole of the troops at Junot's disposal for defence of Lisbon at fourteen thousand men, he concluded that, until Loison's return, Junot would be powerless. Moreover, it was always open to Wellesley to increase his force by arming the five thousand levies produced by the Junta of Oporto, while he could count upon the

¹ *Wellington Desp.* iv. 24-55 ; *Suppl. Desp.* vi. 89, 95 ; *Castle-reagh Desp.* vi. 389.

insurgents to blockade Almeida and Elvas. Upon the 1808. whole, therefore, the General judged that he might safely disembark his army.

Accordingly on the 1st of August the disembarkation Aug. 1. began, in the face of much difficulty and danger owing to heavy surf; for the anchorage, though sheltered from the north, lies open to the south-west. The troops were therefore necessarily landed in boats, many of which were upset, with some loss of life; and it was five days before Wellesley's nine thousand men, with their horses, artillery, and stores, were all ashore.

The work was hardly done before Spencer's detachment appeared at the anchorage, and was disembarked Aug. 6-8. on the three following days; so that altogether eight days were consumed in the landing of fifteen thousand men. Nevertheless the time was not wasted, for Wellesley had still to collect horses and vehicles for his transport. His commissaries were so helpless that he was obliged himself to draw up for them a table of the number and organisation of the pack-mules and ox-waggons; ¹ but by the 10th of August he had Aug. 10. none the less obtained sufficient carriage to convey bread for thirteen days, besides other provisions; mules enough to bring forward his reserve of ammunition; and horses enough to mount sixty dragoons, besides increasing the teams of his guns. But this effort exhausted all the resources of the country round the Mondego, and still left him unable to provide teams for Spencer's artillery.²

It remained to decide upon the route by which to march on Lisbon. Two roads lay open to him—the one hugging the coast by Leiria, Alcobaça, Obidos, and Torres Vedras; the other inland by Pombal, Santarem, and the right bank of the Tagus. Wellesley decided to take the former, in order at once to keep in touch with the fleet which carried his supplies, and to pick up the reinforcements that were on their way to him from England. But, though himself using the road

¹ *Wellington Desp.* iv. 57, 59.

² *Ibid.* iv. 73.

1808. by the coast, Wellesley wrote a letter to await the arrival of Burrard, wherein he urged that General to send forward Moore's corps, when it should land, to Santarem, in order to cut off the retreat of the French

Aug. 7. to eastward. On the 7th of August he distributed his army into six brigades,¹ with half a battery of six-

Aug. 8. pounders attached to each of them.² On the 8th he sent the Royal Veteran battalion, which was on its way to join the garrison of Gibraltar, to the Tagus, and requested the Admiral to employ it for making a feint attack upon Lisbon, when the army should approach Cintra;

¹ *Wellington Suppl. Desp. vi. 101.*

Formation of the brigades:—

1st Brigade .	5th Regiment	Major-general Hill.
	9th "	Brigade-major Fordyce.
	38th "	Assist.-comm.-capt. Hamilton.
3rd Brigade .	29th "	Brigadier-gen. Nightingall.
	82nd "	Brigade-major Stewart.
		Assist.-comm.-lieut. Nelson.
5th Brigade .	45th "	Brig.-gen. Catlin Craufurd.
	50th "	Brigade-major Blair.
	91st "	Assist.-comm. Aylmer.
4th Brigade .	6th "	Brig.-gen. Bowes.
	32nd "	Brigade-major Butler.
		Assist.-comm. Turton.
2nd Brigade .	36th "	Major-general Ferguson.
	40th "	Brigade-major Talbot.
	71st "	Assist.-comm. Dillon.
6th, or Light Brigade	2/95th "	Brig.-gen. Fane.
	5/60th "	Brigade-major M'Neil.
		Assist.-comm. Lamont.

² *Suppl. Desp. vi. 101.* This order as to the half battery is a little mysterious. The 6-pounders brought out by Wellington numbered ten, *i.e.* two brigades of five each. It is not easy to divide five guns in half; but the problem is solved by an order that a howitzer was to be attached to the 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 6th Brigades; which would give those brigades two field-guns and a howitzer apiece, and the remainder three field-guns apiece. But against this are the certain facts that Wellesley brought only three howitzers with him; that he kept one battery of 9-pounders in reserve; that he marched with only eighteen pieces of ordnance altogether; and that he was obliged to leave Spencer's guns behind. One or other of the four infantry-brigades named above must have gone without its howitzer. Returns in Parl. Papers, *Evidence of Court of Enquiry*, p. 51; *Wellington Desp. iv. 73.*

and on the 9th he pushed forward Fane's brigade ^{1808.} with the Twentieth Dragoons to reconnoitre in the ^{Aug. 9.} direction of Leiria. Finally on the 10th he broke up ^{Aug. 10.} his camp at Lavos on the Mondego and marched upon Lisbon.

The men had left their packs on board ship and carried only their great-coats, with a shirt and a pair of shoes rolled up in them, so that they might the more easily be loaded with four days' bread. But they were still out of condition after long confinement on board the transports ; and the first day's march of twelve miles through deep sand to Lugar produced much straggling. On the 11th the army reached Leiria, where it halted ^{Aug. 11.} for one day, and was joined by six thousand Portuguese troops under General Bernardin Freire. A sharp dispute, however, broke out between him and the British General. Freire, evidently loth to place himself under the orders of a foreign officer, refused to march by any road except that of Santarem, unless Wellesley consented to feed his army. Wellesley, unable, owing to the incapacity of his commissaries, to lay any such additional burden upon them, rejected these conditions, and equally declined to follow any road but that by the coast. The two commanders, therefore, parted with high words. Freire consented to give his colleague fourteen hundred light infantry and from two to three hundred cavalry ; and with these Wellesley on the 12th continued his ^{Aug. 12.} advance to Calvario, leaving the remainder of the Portuguese with their General at Leiria. On the 14th ^{Aug. 14.} the British army entered Alcabaça, where for the first time it came into contact with the enemy. Junot, being early informed of the landing of the British, had at once despatched orders to Loison to return immediately ; and Wellesley received intelligence that Loison's column had recrossed the Tagus at Abrantes on the 5th of August. This was false. On the 5th Loison was at Arronches, quite fifty miles to eastward of his supposed station, nor did he reach Abrantes until the 9th, when he halted until the 11th on account of the

1808. exhaustion of his troops. Meanwhile on the 6th Junot had sent northward a force under General Delaborde, at once to cover the retrograde movement of Loison and to observe, or if possible retard, the British advance. Delaborde arrived at Alcabaça on the 10th, where he was joined by three more battalions from Peniche under General Thomières. Wellesley was informed of his presence in the vicinity by the 9th, and conceived his object to be a raid upon the Portuguese magazines at Leiria. It appears, however, that Delaborde had merely been looking for a good defensive position ; for, on hearing of Wellesley's advance to that town, he fell back on the evening of the 13th¹ to Obidos, where he left a rear-guard, and then retired with his main body

Aug. 15. to Roliça. On the 15th Wellesley moved forward to Caldas ; and on that day four companies of the Sixtieth and Ninety-fifth drove in Delaborde's outposts at Brilos, near Obidos, and, pursuing them with more eagerness than prudence, became entangled in an unequal fight with the battalion that formed the French rear-guard. The British would have fared badly had they not presently been extricated by a brigade which was brought forward by General Spencer ; when they retired with the loss of one officer, Lieutenant Bunbury of the Ninety-fifth, killed, and twenty-eight more of all ranks killed, wounded, or prisoners. This petty and unnecessary affair was the first engagement of the Peninsular War.

Meanwhile Loison, leaving Abrantes on the 11th, had reached Thomar on the 12th, and Santarem on the 13th. But here again he was compelled to halt for two days, his troops being unable to move further. In truth his march from Elvas had been cruel. The country was deserted ; the inhabitants had fled ; the troops could obtain no food and, what was worse, no water, though the heat was intense ; and so numerous were the stragglers that Loison was obliged to send out

¹ Thiébault says the evening of the 12th, but possibly some cavalry remained until the next evening.

parties from Santarem with refreshment and vehicles to 1808. bring in such as had not perished from fatigue or by the knives of the peasants. Resuming his march, however, he moved westward from Santarem upon Rio Mayor; and thence, turning south, reached Alcoentre on the 16th. Wellesley meanwhile had remained halted Aug. 16. at Caldas on the 16th in order to allow fresh supplies, which he had drawn from the fleet at Nuestra Senhora de Nazareth, to overtake the army. News reached him at night that Loison's division had passed through Rio Mayor that evening towards Alcoentre; but, since there is another road leading westwards from Rio Mayor directly upon Caldas, Obidos, and Roliça, it was possible that Loison might come up, while he himself was engaged in the attack upon Delaborde which he had appointed for the morrow.

The little walled town of Obidos, picturesquely situated on the summit of a rocky hill, stands at the entrance to a plain which is almost encircled by a gigantic horse-shoe of very steep, rugged, and rocky mountains; the toe of the horse-shoe lying, roughly speaking, to south, and the two heels, between which Obidos stands, to north.¹ From the town itself to south-westward there runs over the plain a chain of isolated rocky eminences,² culminating at a distance of about two miles in a broad low hill, covered with pines and brushwood, which has a front to northward of about eight hundred yards, and a depth to southward of about one thousand. Close alongside but somewhat in the rear, that is to say to south-eastward, of this hill stands the little village of Roliça,³ lying under the slopes of the eastern

¹ More truly south-west and north-east.

² I went over the ground in April 1903. My companion, who was not long returned from the South African War, involuntarily called these eminences kopjes. Obidos itself stands on the largest of these kopjes.

³ This is the true name of this unfortunate village, which has suffered much at the pens of the ignorant. In the collected edition of Wellington's despatches it is correctly spelt. Napier calls it Roriça, which is intelligible, for the liquids l and r are known to be subject

1808. curve of hills, which at this point are broken by the entrance of a little mountain stream. This broad low hill was Delaborde's first position, occupied simply to delay the advance of the British ; but his main position lay some six hundred yards in rear, at the toe of the horse-shoe. Here the mountains sink to the humility of hills, being not above forty or fifty yards high on the eastern side, though they rise steadily from east to west until, at the very tip of the horse-shoe, they are broken by a deep gorge,¹ which carries down the drainage of the hills from the south, and at the mouth of which stands the village of Columbeira. With this gorge Delaborde designed to cover his left flank, his right being protected by a less formidable feature of the same kind fourteen or fifteen hundred yards to eastward. Two roads wound their way up each flank of the position, converging from its summit upon the village of Zambugeira, about a mile in rear, where they united into a single road upon a high plateau of heathery moorland, which rolls in great waves for miles towards Torres Vedras. The face of Delaborde's main position, though now uncovered saving by patches of scrub, was at that time thick with pines ; but the bare rock protrudes in great sheets both on the sides and the summit. The sides are so steep that a man could hardly ascend them without using his hands, were they not seamed by shallow gullies full of rough stones, where the water rushes down during the rains and washes away all vegetation. Upon the lowest slopes of these hills, where they melt into the plain, another curious feature is noticeable—a wall of grey rocks passing like

to phonetic interchange ; and Wellesley appears to have used this form in his original despatch of 16th August, for the clerks at the War Office at once reproduced it in the *Gazette* as Boriça. In the next despatch of 17th August, however, Wellesley used the form Rolica, whereupon these same clerks converted it in the *Gazette* into Roleia ; and as Roleia the action has remained commemorated on the regimental colours ever since. It is high time that such an absurdity were corrected.

¹ In South African language a *poort*.

the teeth of a shark along the whole length of the 1808. French position, and affording excellent cover for sharp-shooters.¹

Delaborde's force, which was supposed by Wellesley to number six thousand men, appears to have consisted of about four thousand infantry in five battalions, one weak regiment of two hundred and fifty light cavalry, and one hundred artillery with five guns.² Wellesley

¹ This last feature is shown only in Napier's map.

² For Delaborde's numbers we have to thank the careful computation of Mr. Oman (*Peninsular War*, i. 235). He has not, I think, been so happy in his reckoning of the British. His figures are drawn from the official return of the Horse Guards of 20th July (*Wellington Desp.* iv. 32), which are as follows:—

Return of forces:—

Major-general Spencer's Corps

Royal Artillery	.	.	.	.	.	.	245
Royal Staff Corps	.	.	.	.	.	.	45
1/6th Foot	.	.	.	.	.	.	946
1/29th "	.	.	.	.	.	.	806
1/32nd "	.	.	.	.	.	.	874
1/50th "	.	.	.	.	.	.	948
1/82nd "	.	.	.	.	.	.	929
							<u>4793</u>

Sir Arthur Wellesley's Corps

20th L.D.	.	.	.	.	.	.	394
Royal Artillery	.	.	.	.	.	.	226
1/5th Foot	.	.	.	.	.	.	990
1/9th "	.	.	.	.	.	.	833
1/36th "	.	.	.	.	.	.	591
1/38th "	.	.	.	.	.	.	957
1/40th "	.	.	.	.	.	.	926
1/45th "	.	.	.	.	.	.	670
5/60th "	.	.	.	.	.	.	936
1/71st "	.	.	.	.	.	.	903
1/91st "	.	.	.	.	.	.	917
95th, 4 cos.	.	.	.	.	.	.	400
							<u>8743</u>

The total of these figures is 13,536; but they represent rank and file only, whereas those of Delaborde's corps include all ranks; and to arrive at the total of all ranks of the British we must add

1808. had at the least fourteen thousand British of all ranks and sixteen hundred Portuguese, so that he outnumbered Delaborde by four to one. From the church-tower of Obidos he could observe his enemy's isolated position on the low hill in the plain; and accordingly

Aug. 17. at seven o'clock on the morning of the 17th he marched forward from Obidos, with the design of enveloping him on both flanks. Not forgetting, however, that, according to his information, Loison might at any moment break in upon the British left flank, he detached Trant with twelve hundred Portuguese infantry and fifty cavalry far to his right, to turn Delaborde's left and enter the mountains in his rear. At the same time he ordered General Ferguson with his own and Bowes's brigades of infantry, three companies of the Sixtieth, forty British and Portuguese dragoons, and one battery of light artillery to ascend the hills that bounded the eastern side of the plain, and turn the position of Roliça by its right. The remainder of the troops under Wellesley in person meanwhile marched across the plain straight upon the front of Delaborde. Hill's brigade in line of battalion-columns moved wide on the right, preceded by the remainder of the cavalry; Nightingall's and Craufurd's brigades followed the high road from Obidos to Roliça, with one battery of six-pounders and a second of nine-pounders, while Fane's

one-eighth, or 1692, which makes 15,228. On the other hand Wellesley, in his evidence before the Court of Enquiry, gave Spencer's numbers at 4385 rank and file, including artillery; and his total force at 12,300 rank and file, apparently exclusive of cavalry and artillery (*Evidence*, p. 49). Adding one-eighth to the above number of Spencer's corps, we get a total of 4933 of all ranks. To make up the whole force, we may add to 12,300, from the above figures, 620 for the rank and file of Wellesley's cavalry and artillery. The rank and file would then number 12,920; and by adding one-eighth we reach a total of 14,535 of all ranks. Allowing for deductions for sick, we may call the army 14,000 of all ranks. But it is singular that Spencer's corps should have been so weak, for by a return of 19th June sent home by him, it amounted on that day (including 51 R.E. and staff corps) to 5275 of all ranks fit for duty, and 97 sick.

riflemen were extended to the left to maintain communication between Ferguson's column and the centre of the army.

1808.
Aug. 17.

Delaborde's outposts on the chain of rocks near Obidos gave early warning of Wellesley's advance, which was conducted slowly and in imposing order. On approaching the hill of Roliça, Hill's brigade deployed for attack upon Delaborde's left front ; Nightingall's likewise deployed against his centre ; Fane's riflemen spread themselves over the eastern hills ; Craufurd's brigade, except the Forty-fifth, which was formed on the left of Nightingall's, halted to form the reserve ; and the British guns opened fire. Simultaneously Ferguson's column descended the lateral valley upon Delaborde's right flank, while Trant's appeared at the hamlet of Quinta Gruga on his left. Nothing could have been better timed, yet all was to no purpose. Under the fire of his skirmishers, who were well favoured by the ground, Delaborde skilfully withdrew his troops with extreme rapidity at the latest possible moment to the gorge of Columbeira, covering his retirement with his cavalry. Presently his line reappeared, crowning his chosen position on the heights ; and Wellesley realised that the whole of the morning's work had been thrown away.

Wellesley's new dispositions were quickly made, being simply the old repeated. Trant was again detached for a wide turning movement far to the right ; and Ferguson reascended the hills to encompass Delaborde from the British left. When these columns should have worked their way round both of Delaborde's flanks, Wellesley intended to hurl the rest of his force at the gullies, four in all, which at a little distance appeared to offer the only means of ascending the heights. It seems, however, that the riflemen had never ceased to be engaged with the French on the lower slopes of the hills ; and for this reason, or perhaps from misapprehension of orders, Colonel Lake of the Twenty-ninth, on the right of Nightingall's brigade, led his

1808. regiment straight at a gully in rear of the village of Aug. 17. Columbeira. Since the incline was very steep and the foothold bad, it is probable that he galloped his horse up the hill, and hurried his men unduly; but they scrambled after him, necessarily by files, penetrating further and further into the French position as they approached the head of the water-course, and therefore exposed to fire from the front and both flanks. At length three or four companies of the regiment emerged on the summit of the plateau and began to deploy, fortunately in face of a Swiss corps which was disaffected to the French and ran forward with muskets reversed to shake hands with the British. But, while recovering their order, the companies of the Twenty-ninth were charged from the rear and utterly broken by a French regiment from the lower slopes of the position, which thought itself in danger of being cut off. Lake was killed, four officers and thirty men were taken, and the rest staggered down the hill, where they rallied on their remaining companies, and presently renewed their assault, supported by the Ninth from Hill's brigade. Wellesley meanwhile, to save Lake, had ordered a general attack; and the Fifth assailed Delaborde's extreme left, while the Sixtieth and Ninety-fifth advanced by the road on his extreme right. Delaborde had detached three companies far to his right to watch Ferguson, but with his four remaining battalions he made a fine defence, charging the disordered British as they reached the summit of the heights, and repulsing three several attacks. The fire of the British artillery, excellently directed by Colonel Robe, began however to tell; and the British infantry, fighting with a determination most creditable to young soldiers, at length succeeded in establishing themselves on the heights. Ferguson's column, which had taken a wrong direction, at last made its appearance, and Delaborde saw that it was time for him to retreat.

This difficult operation he conducted with admirable coolness and skill, withdrawing his four battalions by

pairs in succession, and covering the whole movement 1808. by feint attacks of his cavalry. It was not until he Aug. 17. reached a defile beyond Zambugeira that the British pursuit did him any great mischief ; but there, owing to the narrowness of the road, his troops became unsteady, and the British captured three guns and a few prisoners. Wellesley followed him little further ; and Delaborde continued his retreat, in no very good order but unmolested, to Montechique. He had fought a most gallant though perhaps unduly rash rearguard-action ; and had escaped very creditably with a loss of six hundred killed and wounded, he himself being among the latter. He flattered himself that his obstinacy had somewhat awed his enemy ; but it was not so. Only four battalions and a half of the British¹ had been engaged, as Wellesley pointed out in his despatch ; and they were well pleased to have driven an almost equal number of French from so strong a position. Whether without Robe's artillery—eighteen guns against Delaborde's five—they would have succeeded in doing so, is another question ; but the fact remains that both sides were satisfied with themselves, and not without reason. Wellesley's loss amounted to four officers and sixty-six men killed, twenty officers and three hundred and fifteen men wounded, four officers and seventy-eight men missing ; in all four hundred and eighty-seven casualties, of which one hundred and ninety fell upon the Twenty-ninth. Colonel Lake, whose impatience had brought this loss upon it, and who had fallen at its head, was the same man who had been wounded before his father's eyes at the crisis of Laswaree. Whether, but for his fault, Wellesley would have converted the action into a more telling success is an extremely doubtful matter. Possibly, had he not been apprehensive of Loison's

¹ The 5th, 9th, 29th, 60th, 4 cos. of the 95th, flank cos. of the 38th. The casualties of the 82nd (twenty-five killed and wounded) indicate, however, that they took some part in the assault.

1808. intervention, he might have begun his turning movements earlier, under cover of the dark, and captured the greater part, if not the whole, of Delaborde's force. As things fell out, he lost his opportunity, and Delaborde escaped ; though Loison, if the British General had but known it, was pursuing his march by Cercal upon Torres Vedras and could not possibly have reached the battle-field. In after years Wellesley always maintained that the combat of Roliça was a very important engagement, possibly because it was one with which he was himself little satisfied. Its chief historic interest lies in the curious fact that he, who showed such surpassing skill in hiding his troops in a defensive position, should in his first action against the French have had to deal with an enemy concealed with a dexterity that he himself might have envied.

Aug. 18. On the morning after the fight Wellesley received information that General Acland's brigade from England had arrived off Peniche, and that General Anstruther's was also hourly expected. Since Peniche was still in the occupation of the French, Wellesley decided that these reinforcements should land at the mouth of the river Maceira, some twelve miles south of Roliça ; and accordingly on the 18th he struck south-westward upon

Aug. 19. Lourinhaõ, and on the following day reached Vimeiro,¹ where he took up a position to cover the disembarkation. Owing to calm weather the transports could not stand in towards the shore until late on that day ; but Anstruther's brigade was set ashore on the same evening, though not without difficulty and loss owing to the surf ; and the greater part of Acland's landed on

Aug. 20. the evening of the 20th. It had been Wellesley's intention to advance on the following morning, his intelligence being that Junot's advanced guard was before Torres Vedras, and the whole of the French army concentrating behind it ; and he had actually issued his orders for the march, with the idea of turning

¹ The name of this village also has been slightly corrupted into Vimiero and Vimiera ; but the correct spelling is as in the text.

Junot's position by pushing his own advanced guard to 1808. Mafra. In the evening, however, he was informed that Aug. 20. the *Brazen* frigate was in Maceira Bay with Sir Harry Burrard on board, that General having gone forward ahead of his convoy. Burrard was on the point of coming ashore, when Wellesley anticipated him by boarding the frigate and reporting his proceedings and plans. Wellesley could give little more information than that the French cavalry was numerous and enterprising, whereas he himself had none ; that his artillery horses were wretchedly bad ; that supplies could only be obtained from the shipping, none being procurable in the country ; that he had swept the district bare of mules, and that the owners of bullock-carts refused to allow their vehicles to go further from their homes than the nearest place at which they could be relieved by others. Burrard, after due consideration, forbade any further advance until Moore's corps, with which he had sailed from England, should have landed and joined the army. The force, he argued not untruly, was dependent upon the elements for its supplies ; a gale might blow the ships off the coast at any moment ; the French had cavalry, the British had none ; the French artillery could move rapidly, the British could hardly crawl ; the French knew the country, the British did not ; Acland's and Anstruther's brigades were unfit to march, being only just landed ; lastly, the French army—and here he was right—was stronger than Wellesley supposed. If in the course of the advance any mishap should befall the British, there was no end to the disasters which might follow. He therefore forbade Wellesley to proceed ; and the order for the forward movement was cancelled on the same night.¹

Wellesley was greatly chagrined ; and there can be little doubt but that Burrard was wrong in his decision. All that he said was very true ; and it must be remembered, in justice to a singularly straightforward

¹ Evidence of Wellesley and Burrard, *Evidence of Court of Enquiry*.

1808. and estimable officer, who had seen much service, that Aug. 20. his experience of such expeditions had been most unfortunate. In 1798 he had been compelled to surrender with fourteen hundred men at Ostend, because a sudden gale had prevented his re-embarkation; and in 1799 he had served in North Holland with the Duke of York's army, which, chiefly from want of transport and supplies, had only by great good fortune escaped capture by a timely capitulation. With such reminiscences he was naturally cautious, for they stamped him as an unlucky officer; and indeed it is extremely likely that an advance might not have prospered under his command. Nevertheless, it is nearly always a mistake to yield the initiative to the enemy; and Burrard, knowing that Junot's army was assembling only twenty miles in his front, undoubtedly committed this error. His sin found him out within a few hours; for the great difference between the lucky and the unlucky is, that the latter pay for their faults and the former do not. It is curious to see upon what small matters reputations may depend. If Wellesley had not chanced to board the frigate when he did, Burrard would have come ashore, stayed ashore and won—for he could hardly have helped it—the battle of Vimeiro. Possibly if he had been actually in command from the first, he might have turned it to rather greater account than was eventually the case. As things fell out, having given the order for the army to halt, he decided to sleep on board the frigate, which lay within a mile and a half of the beach, and to land early next morning. Never was there a more unfortunate man.

Meanwhile Junot had been actively employed in the Aug. 11. concentration of his army. On the 11th of August he had sent a detachment under General Kellermann to drive away the insurgents of Alemtejo, who, relieved of the presence of Loison, had advanced almost to Setubal; and, this work having been efficiently done, he withdrew the garrison from Setubal itself into Lisbon. He then put that city into a thorough state of defence, occupying,

indeed, so many posts in consequence of the appearance 1808. of a few British transports¹ off the port, as to absorb seven battalions, or over six thousand men. He made, in fact, the same mistake which General Fraser had committed at Alexandria in 1807, and which had called down upon him such sharp criticism from Sir John Moore, even before the consequences were known. A decisive blow to the British, as has been well said, was the most certain way to ensure the tranquillity of Lisbon ; and therefore it was Junot's true policy to take any risk in the city rather than hazard a defeat in the field.² However, on the 15th he marched northward Aug. 15. with two battalions of infantry, a regiment of cavalry, a squadron of volunteer horse formed by the French residents in Lisbon, and ten guns, the whole escorting a large convoy of supplies and stores. On the 17th Aug. 17. he reached Villafranca, when a false report of a British disembarkation at Cascaes, a little west of the mouth of the Tagus, made the troops turn back for some miles. Ascertaining, however, that all was safe, Junot went ahead, with his staff only, to Cercal, where he joined Loison and distinctly perceived the sound of distant cannon, which the peasants correctly reported to be due to a fight between the British and Delaborde. On the 18th he fell back to Torres Vedras, where he Aug. 18. heard of the retreat of Delaborde to Montechique, and summoned that officer to join him. Delaborde duly appeared on the 19th ; and on the 20th the convoy, Aug. 19. after much delay owing to the steepness of the roads, Aug. 20. came up with its escort. This gave Junot a total strength, apparently, of about thirteen thousand men with twenty-three guns ; which force he reorganised into two infantry divisions, each of two brigades, under Generals Delaborde and Loison, a Reserve of infantry, and one cavalry division under General Margaron. In

¹ These contained the Buffs, who had been brought from the garrison of Madeira ; but the feint, as we have seen, was a part of Wellesley's plan as communicated to the Admiral.

² Oman, i. 243.

1808. all, the infantry numbered between ten and eleven thousand; the cavalry nearly two thousand; and the artillery about seven hundred.¹

This was little more than half of the force which Junot commanded in Portugal. He now realised that he had left too many garrisons behind him, and sent orders to another battalion and a half to join him from Lisbon.

Aug. 19-20. Meanwhile on the 19th and 20th his cavalry, having no hostile horse to fear, spread with great boldness in all directions about Wellesley's camp, making it dangerous for small parties of British to wander far from the lines, and even penetrating along the beach to the landing-place in rear of the British position.² Since the disembarkation of troops was proceeding throughout both

1 Delaborde's Division

Brigade Brennier. 3/2nd Light.

3/4th "

1 and 2/7th Line.

Brigade Thomières. 1 and 2/86th Line (less 4 cos. at Elvas).

2 cos./4th Swiss.

Loison's Division

Brigade Solignac. 3/12th Light.

3/15th "

3/58th Line.

Brigade Charlot. 3/32nd Line.

3/82nd Line.

Reserve

4 battalions of massed Grenadier cos.

Total infantry 10,400

Margaron's Cavalry Division

1st Provisional Chasseurs

3rd " Dragoons

4th " "

5th " "

1 squadron Volunteer cavalry

Artillery, etc.

}

1950

700

Total of all arms . . . 13,050

These figures are taken from Mr. Oman's computation (i. 246-247), which is prepared with his usual care. Wellington and Burrard both reckoned Junot's army at Vimeiro at 14,000.

² *Court of Enquiry*, p. 43.

of these days, it is almost incredible that Junot can have 1808. been ignorant of the fact that Wellesley had halted simply to pick up reinforcements. But the French Generals despised all enemies ; and probably Junot argued that, if the British were likely to grow stronger day by day, this was the better reason for attacking them at once. It was enough for him that the British were stationary ; and he resolved to march on that night and to fall upon them at dawn of the morrow, with thirteen thousand men against twenty thousand.¹

The traveller who follows the road, which Junot Aug. 21. was about to take, northward from Torres Vedras to

¹ The British army at Vimeiro was brigaded as follow :—

Cavalry. 20th L.D. (240 men only mounted).

Artillery. 2 batteries of 6-prs. ; 1 battery of 9-prs.

Infantry. 1st Brigade, Hill, 1/5th, 1/9th, 1/38th : 3 batts.

2nd " Ferguson, 36th, 1/40th, 1/71st : 3 batts.

3rd " Nightingall, 29th, 1/82nd : 2 batts.

4th " Bowes, 1/6th, 1/32nd : 2 batts.

5th " Catlin Craufurd, 1/45th, 91st : 2 batts.

6th " Fane, 1/50th, 5/60th ; 4 cos. 2/95th : 2½ batts.

7th " Anstruther, 2/9th, 2/43rd, 2/52nd, 2/97th : 4 batts.

8th " Acland, 2nd, 7½ cos./20th, 2 cos. 1/95th : 2 batts.

Mr. Oman, after deducting the casualties of Roliça, computes the force at 16,778. By a slip or a misprint the 95th are stated at 456 instead of 354, which will reduce the total to 16,676. But these figures represent, as before, the number of rank and file ; and we must add to them one-eighth to arrive at the numbers of all ranks. Adding then 2084, we obtain the figure of 18,760 of all ranks ; to which must be added 2000 Portuguese, making 20,760 as a grand total. Mr. Oman is beyond question right in overstating the British force rather than the contrary ; but it is well known (and to no man better than to him) that the numbers in the fighting line are always considerably smaller than those given in an embarkation return. It will, therefore, I think, be best to take Wellington's statement of his numbers at Roliça, namely 14,000, and add to these the strength of the brigades of Anstruther and Acland. Of these two brigades there were disembarked 4035 rank and file, or say 4500 of all ranks. Adding these to the troops at Roliça we get 18,500, from which must be deducted the casualties on the 15th and 17th (506), making a total of 18,000 British and 2000 Portuguese, or 20,000 in all.

1808. Vimeiro, finds himself traversing blind and broken Aug. 21. country much resembling that about Aldershot—unenclosed, sandy, heathery, and dotted with vineyards and small coverts of maritime pines. On approaching the village of Vimeiro itself, he suddenly encounters a steep ridge, which towers up above the lower features of the circumjacent country, and bears much likeness to the Berkshire downs. Surveying this ridge from west to east he perceives that it is broken by a deep gorge, before which there rises out of the lower ground a broad round hill, little if at all higher than its surroundings. Eastward of this gorge the higher ridge is prolonged, but sinks steadily down until it melts away into the lowland. Westward of the gorge, it extends for two miles to the sea, growing constantly steeper and more formidable as it approaches the beach. I shall call the portion of the down that lies between the gorge and the sea the western ridge, that which runs eastward from the gorge the eastern ridge, and the broad round hill before the gorge Vimeiro Hill.

Such is the aspect which the ground presents to one who approaches it from the south; and singularly deceitful it is. The ridge is throughout broad and flat-topped, but much narrower to west than to east of the gorge. The southern face of the western ridge, great part of it covered with vines, though not terraced, is everywhere so steep as to make the ascent fatiguing, and for the last mile at the seaward end is almost, if not quite, inaccessible. Its northern or rearward face is a precipice of grey rock, at the foot of which the little stream of Maceira,¹ after winding placidly northward through the gorge, turns abruptly to the west and roars down headlong to the sea. The sides of the gorge itself are so abrupt that the grey rock constantly breaks through the soil and entirely dominates it for fifty feet from the summit; but there is a rough track, passing down from the crest of the western ridge to

¹ More properly Rio de Alcabuchelle.

the southern mouth of the gorge, by which troops and 1808. guns could move without difficulty. The eastern ridge Aug. 21. is so wide as to constitute practically a small plateau, difficult of ascent upon no side except to the north-west; but at the foot of its southern face runs a very steep gully, which carries down a small tributary to the Maceira and serves as a ditch to the glacis above. Moreover, though the ridge, as I have said, falls steadily to eastward, there passes across it from north to south, about three thousand yards east of the gorge, near the village of Ventosa, a wide rift, which, though affording no actual support for the flank of an army, presents a good position for troops thrown back *en potence* to protect that flank.

For the rest, assuming the ridge as a whole to be the main position of an army, Vimeiro Hill, which is dotted with copses and vineyards, forms an advanced post or salient angle in its centre. The village itself lies under its northern slope, on the right bank of the Maceira; and between the buildings and the stream is a narrow belt of flat land. Tracks practicable for artillery led into the village from the eastern and the western ridge, so that it formed the connecting link between the two. The hill itself is commanded from both ridges, especially from the westward, and, moreover, dominates of itself a considerable extent of ground to the east and south.¹ Wellesley, however, had not occu-

¹ Napier calls Vimeiro Hill a "rugged isolated height," probably by inference from the words of Wellesley's despatch, for he had never been over the ground himself. As a matter of fact it is neither isolated nor rugged, but simply one feature among many in a broken country, and singularly inoffensive and lowly in appearance. Leach, who was present, describes it as of no considerable height. From my own observation I should have said that Vimeiro Hill was commanded only at long range by the field-guns of those days from either ridge, and particularly from the eastern; which view Napier shares, evidently from measurements on the map. Nor again should I have said that the hill commanded any very great extent of ground to southward. But upon both these points I am overruled by the words of Wellesley's despatch; and, since it needs more courage than I possess to differ from such a master

1808. pied the position at large with a view to defence, but Aug. 21. simply as a convenient camping-ground for one night, in order to cover the disembarkation of the troops of Acland and Anstruther. He had meant to advance and attack, not to sit still and be attacked. The bulk of his army, namely the brigades of Hill, Catlin Craufurd, Nightingall, Acland, Bowes, and Ferguson, with eight guns, was posted on the western ridge for convenience of water ; a single battalion of Ferguson's brigade—the Fortieth—being stationed on the eastern ridge, where water was scarce.¹ Trant's Portuguese were in rear at Maceira, on the northern side of the gorge, and therefore wholly invisible from the south. Fane's and Anstruther's brigades were on Vimeiro Hill. The cavalry, the rest of the artillery, and the whole of the transport—four hundred bullock-carts, with their teams, and four to five hundred pack-mules—were parked on the flat ground to north and west of the village. With his victualling train thus in the van rather than in the rear of his army, and three-fourths of his infantry in a position from whence, if assailed, they could not retreat, it should seem that Wellesley did not look for an attack. Nevertheless he neglected no precautions, thrusting his picquets well forward ; while his tiny force of cavalry patrolled the country as far as it dared, watching especially the road from Torres Vedras.

Not long after midnight a German officer galloped to Wellesley's quarters with the report that the French army, twenty thousand strong, was within an hour's march. Since the messenger showed some alarm,²

upon the details of a position which he defended, I have written as appears in the text. Nevertheless I venture to record my own observations in a note ; for, as will presently be seen, Wellesley may have had his own reasons for his description of the ground at Vimeiro.

¹ Hence Mr. Oman describes Ferguson's brigade as “ astride the gorge ” ; but, from the nature of the ground, the Fortieth must have been a mile away from the remainder of the brigade.

² Mr. Oman quotes Landsheit's autobiography to prove that the messenger was a German sergeant in the 20th L.D., and unperturbed.

Wellesley was inclined to be incredulous, but took a few additional precautions ; ordering, among other things, that three nine-pounders and as many six-pounders should be brought forward to Vimeiro Hill. The army was under arms, as usual, before dawn ; but it was seven o'clock before a cloud of dust announced the advance of Junot's column, not along the road which leads directly upon Vimeiro village, but by that which traverses the eastern ridge about two and a half miles to east of it upon Lourinhaõ. At eight o'clock the French cavalry extended itself across the hills over against the British position ; and behind them the main body came on. No great part of it was visible together, owing to woods and broken ground ; and such portions of it as were seen presented an unusual appearance, for, owing to the heat of the weather, the men were wearing white linen frocks and carried their blue coats folded on their packs. Having driven in the British picquets and arrived before Vimeiro Hill, Junot halted and deployed his troops. Then, after a short reconnaissance, he decided to seize the eastern ridge, which seemed to be unoccupied, with one brigade, and, turning the rest of his force upon the front and flank of Vimeiro Hill itself, to overwhelm it by an attack from three sides.

Wellesley, strangely enough, had on that very morning judged his right wing upon the western ridge to be too weak, and had brought up Acland's brigade, which had only just landed, to strengthen it in second line.¹ Junot ignored that right wing altogether. What number of troops he could descry upon the western ridge is uncertain—possibly none at all—for Wellesley's practice was to conceal his men behind the crest of a hill. Junot cannot have been ignorant that the British troops extended to the sea, for his cavalry

Gleig had put forward the same story before the death of Napier, who rejected it with scorn, upon the Duke of Wellington's own authority. *Battles of the Peninsula*, p. 5 (Murray, 1891). The point is of small importance.

¹ Anstruther's Journal, printed in the *Memoir* attached to Wyld's *Atlas of the Peninsular War*.

1808. had reported that fact ; but they had reported also that Aug. 21. the British occupied Lourinhaõ as well as the strong ground behind Vimeiro, and that the position was of great extent. He may therefore have thought that his enemy's force was divided into two bodies too far apart to give mutual support. However that may be, he seems to have made up his mind that many, if not quite all, of Wellesley's troops were on and about Vimeiro Hill. Without, therefore, so much as a demonstration against the British right, he directed Brennier's brigade, consisting of the four battalions which had fought so gallantly at Roliça and one regiment of dragoons, against the eastern ridge ; intending as soon as Brennier should have opened his attack to assault simultaneously the position of Vimeiro Hill.

Brennier's dragoons led his advance ; and the dust of their march was probably the sign that gave the British Commander the first hint of Junot's manœuvre. Grasping the situation at once, Wellesley directed the brigades of Ferguson, Nightingall, Bowes, and Acland to move successively to the eastern ridge, and to take up a position at right angles to their former front ; while Craufurd's brigade was ordered to support Trant's Portuguese, who were already stationed on a parallel ridge further to the north. How far the movement of the four brigades first named was visible to Junot or to his officers is doubtful.¹ These troops, or at any rate

¹ Napier assumes that it must have been invisible. I think the assumption unwarrantable. When going over the ground I passed through the gorge, northward, hoping to ascend the western ridge from the northern side. I found it absolutely impracticable, and was obliged to return to the extreme north-eastern spur of the ridge, where I found a track over the rock so rough that I should have been sorry to ride over it except on an extremely sure-footed pony. No considerable body of men—not even a single battalion—could have descended it without great delay, and for guns it was impossible. The point is of importance, for Junot's most fatal blunder—the despatch of a second brigade to Brennier's support—was committed when he became aware of the movement of British troops to the eastern ridge ; and the problem to be solved is, whether he saw them starting, or whether he did not see them till after their arrival.

their guns, must have moved along at least a corner of 1808. the south front of the western ridge, on their descent ^{Aug. 21.} into the valley of the Maceira; but they would have taken precisely the same route if they had been going to Vimeiro Hill. Once in the valley their progress was absolutely masked by Vimeiro Hill itself; and their way to the eastern ridge lay through the gorge and up the reverse or northern slope, where of course they were entirely concealed. It is probable that, even if their march from the western ridge was observed at the outset, little account was taken of it by Junot, except possibly to accelerate the assault upon Vimeiro Hill before that position could be further reinforced.

Certain it is that, long before there was any sign of Brennier's brigade on the eastern ridge, the brigades of Thomières and Charlot, together only four and a half battalions, advanced against Vimeiro. Thomières's brigade was on the French right, with gallant old Delaborde, his wound received at Roliça still unhealed, riding at its head; and Charlot's brigade, led by Loison, was on the left. Opposed to them were Fane's light brigade on the British left, and Anstruther's to the right of Fane.¹ The British battalions, or all of them that the French could see, were drawn up with their artillery on the flat summit of the hill, upon open ground, with a belt of scrub about one hundred and fifty yards to their front. Owing to the woods and the broken nature of the country, the advance of Delaborde was unseen by the British until his column appeared, at no great distance, coming down the road which leads straight into Vimeiro from the east. Wellesley, who was on the eastern ridge, caught sight

¹ It is astonishing what different accounts are given of the situation of these two brigades. Napier in his plan puts Fane's brigade on the right and Anstruther's on the left; all who base their accounts upon his narrative fall into the same error. But Anstruther's Journal, Leach, and Colonel Walker of the 50th all give the position of the two brigades as in my text; and they are borne out by Foy. The brigades are correctly placed in the plans of Arteche and Mr. Oman.

1808. of it earlier than his subordinates on Vimeiro Hill, and Aug. 21. sent orders at the last moment to Anstruther to move further to his left ; but the message came too late for any change of dispositions. At a distance of nine hundred yards the French deployed to their left for the attack, and, covered by the fire of seven guns, moved rapidly forward in dense masses, together with their cannon.¹ Colonel Robe effectually answered the French fire with his own twelve guns ; and Fane sent forward almost the whole of his brigade in skirmishing order to engage the sharp-shooters which covered the French advance. Though heavily stricken both by the British gunners and the riflemen, the French never paused until they reached a hedge some distance up the hill, when they collected themselves and drove the British skirmishers headlong back.

So long had the British riflemen lingered in the front that they masked the fire both of the Ninety-seventh, which was the left-hand battalion of Anstruther's brigade, and of their own batteries ; and the French pressed so close upon them that Robe in despair gave up his guns for lost. Anstruther sent out four companies to cover the retreat of the Ninety-fifth ; but the riflemen were hardly re-formed when Thomières's brigade at last closed with Fane's. The whole stress of Thomières's attack therefore fell on the Fiftieth ; but it so happened that three companies of that regiment had been thrown out rather wide on its left flank, and that these by their fire attracted the French to incline somewhat to their right. Colonel Walker of the Fiftieth thereupon seized the moment to wheel his right wing upon Thomières's left flank. The manœuvre was not completed before this flank of the French opened a confused fire. Only two companies

¹ The Colonel of the 50th described their order as "close order of half battalions," which I interpret to mean a line of half battalions, each half battalion being in column of companies, three ranks deep. Foy complains that the depth of the columns was insufficient.

of Walker's right wing were formed at the moment; but 1808. with great readiness he ordered these to fire a volley ^{Aug. 21.} and charge. The French column staggered under the shock of the attack from both sides simultaneously. The drivers of three French guns, which were in advance, cut their traces and plunged back with their teams into the midst of their own infantry. The three remaining companies of the right wing of the Fiftieth, coming up into their places, fired their volley; and, before they could charge, the whole of the brigade of Thomières became an ungovernable mob, and rushed down the slope like a flock of sheep, carrying their officers with them in utter rout and confusion.

At about the same time Charlot's brigade came up within striking distance of Anstruther. True to the principle of his chief, the British Brigadier showed few of his troops until the time was come to use them. The Ninety-seventh, which was aligned with Fane's brigade on the left of Anstruther, was the only battalion in advance, and even so was hidden in a fold of the ground. The Forty-third was in open column behind the right flank of the Ninety-seventh; the Fifty-second in echelon behind the left flank; and the Ninth in open column to the left rear of the Fifty-second. In the front of Anstruther's position, about one hundred and fifty yards distant, was a copse; and, as the French column emerged from this shelter, the General ordered the Ninety-seventh to move forward and fire. After two or three effective volleys which shook the French greatly, the Ninety-seventh began to advance, and Anstruther, finding it impossible to check the men, ordered the Fifty-second to double round their rear and fall upon Charlot's left flank. The attack was decisive. Charlot's column dissolved into a mass of fugitives, and poured down the hill with their comrades. Junot's first attack therefore was totally repulsed, with heavy loss to the assailants. The whole of the guns which accompanied them had been captured; Generals Delaborde and Charlot had been wounded;

1808. and the troops had been so roughly handled that little
Aug. 21. more could be expected of them that day.

By this time Junot had begun to realise that his haste was likely to lead to unpleasant consequences. In the course of his first attack he had become aware of the movement of British troops on the eastern ridge, and, feeling apprehensive for the success of Brennier, had detached Solignac's brigade of three battalions, together with six guns, to his support. This left him no further infantry in hand than the reserve of four battalions of Grenadiers ; but, still despising his enemy, he resolved to throw these at once into the fight, supported by four guns. The two leading battalions under General St. Clair accordingly advanced in column of platoons,¹ apparently by the same road as that taken by Delaborde ; but by this time the howitzers of the British reserve had come forward ; and the French suffered heavily from the fire of shrapnel shell, a new invention now used for the first time in action. The British artillery was feebly answered by the French, which could only unlimber from time to time lest it should embarrass its infantry ; but the Grenadiers pressed on with great gallantry to within range of musketry, and were about to deploy, when they were met by the converging fire of at least three British battalions. The effect was appalling. The two leading platoons fell like one man ; nearly all the horses of the artillery were also overthrown ; both Colonels of artillery were wounded ; and the rear of the column, breaking away to its right, rushed headlong down to the shelter of the gully at the foot of the eastern ridge.

Meanwhile General Kellermann, passing round the rear of St. Clair with the two remaining battalions of Grenadiers, led his column round Fane's left flank by a hollow road, and tried to penetrate into Vimeiro from the north. Anstruther therefore detached the Forty-

¹ Platoons varied in strength. These would probably be of sixteen files, three ranks deep.

third against the left flank, while Acland, whose brigade 1808.
was in reserve on the eastern ridge, of his own initiative Aug. 21.
opened fire upon Kellermann's right flank with his
guns, and sent four companies of light infantry to ply it
also with musketry. Near the entrance to the village,
however, where the Forty-third met the French
Grenadiers, there was confused and savage fighting both
with bullet and bayonet, until at length Kellermann's
brave men gave way and fell back beaten. Thus Junot's
second attack was repulsed with the same slaughter and
loss of guns as the first. The slopes of Vimeiro Hill
were covered with retreating Frenchmen ; and now
Colonel Taylor of the Twentieth Light Dragoons
trotted forward,¹ and, wheeling to his left, swooped upon
the fugitives, cutting many down and scattering the
rest in all directions. As usual, however, the dragoons
became uncontrollable, and, going too far, were charged
by some of Margaron's squadrons and utterly over-
thrown. Taylor was killed, and half of his men and
horses were slain or disabled. The British battalions,
which had also advanced in pursuit, were warned in time
of this menace of the French cavalry, and fell back to
their position without mishap.

The action in the centre was almost at an end when,
at about half-past ten, that on the eastern ridge began.
Brennier for some reason seems to have gone too far
to the northward before he turned west, and to have
followed one of the tributaries of the Maceira downward
until he found himself hopelessly entangled among
cliffs and ravines. It is at least certain that he went
astray. Solignac, who probably started by the same
road as Brennier, chose the right place for his wheel to
the west, and came unsupported upon the brigades of
Ferguson, Bowes, and Nightingall, which were drawn

¹ Landsheit says that the Portuguese cavalry refused to charge
with the Twentieth, which is quite possible ; but I do not greatly
trust his statements. He says that Wellesley in person gave the
order for the Twentieth to charge ; whereas it is practically certain
that at the moment Wellesley was on the eastern ridge, a mile or
two away.

1808. up, facing to eastward, on the western side of the rift
Aug. 21. already described, by the village of Ventosa. The British were formed in two lines; the first, from right to left, consisting of the Eighty-second of Nightingall's brigade and the Thirty-sixth, Fortieth, and Seventy-first of Ferguson's; while the second was made up of Nightingall's remaining battalion, namely, the Twenty-ninth, and of the two regiments of Bowes's brigade. Besides these the brigades of Acland and Craufurd were within a quarter of an hour's march, so that Solignac's three battalions were hopelessly overmatched. The British, however, were lying down; and the French brigadier, being unable to see their numbers, deployed and led his men up the steep ascent through a galling fire of the British skirmishers. As he reached the brow of the hill the front line of the British rose, came forward to meet them, poured in a destructive volley at a range of one hundred yards, reloaded, fired a second volley, and advanced with charged bayonets. The French, torn to tatters by the converging fire, which had struck down Solignac among many others, gave way in confusion, deserting their guns; and Ferguson, leaving the Seventy-first and Eighty-second to guard the captured artillery, which had been abandoned in the rift, pushed on with the Thirty-sixth and Fortieth in pursuit. Far outflanked on their left when they attacked, the French had swerved to the other flank when they turned, and, following this direction, were steadily edged away by Ferguson towards the north-west, with every prospect of being cut off from the remainder of the army. Now, however, Brennier's force, guided by the sound of the firing, suddenly came on the scene unobserved, having climbed up from the deep ravine in which it had been buried. Noticing the Eighty-second and Seventy-first at ease round their captured guns, Brennier at once launched his four battalions against them, at the same time sending his cavalry round their right or eastern flank. For the moment the two British battalions were driven back and the guns were

recaptured; but the Twenty-ninth, formed four deep so 1808. as to be ready either for cavalry or for infantry, came Aug. 21. up upon one flank of the French; the Seventy-first hastened back to assail the other; Nightingall's brigade rallied; and Brennier's battalions were presently driven back into the ravine from whence they had ascended, the French cavalry closing behind them to cover their retreat.

Among the wounded was Brennier, who was at once brought to Sir Arthur Wellesley. The French General asked eagerly if the reserve under Kellermann had attacked; and Wellesley, ascertaining from other prisoners that it had, divined that Junot had exhausted all his resources. Sir Harry Burrard now came up. He had landed at nine o'clock, but had waived his right to take command so that Wellesley might fight the battle according to his own excellent dispositions. Wellesley accosted him directly with, "Sir Harry, now is your time to advance. The enemy are completely beaten, and we shall be in Lisbon in three days. We have a large body of troops which have not been in action; let us move them from the right on the road to Torres Vedras, and I will follow the French with the left." Every word of this apostrophe was true. The battle ended at noon. There was not a regiment of the French infantry which had not been heavily punished; fourteen out of their twenty-four guns had been captured;¹ and the entire force, the cavalry excepted, was demoralised. Moreover, after their defeat, the whole of the enemy's foot had fled eastward for shelter, leaving open the line of their retreat to Torres Vedras, so that the British could reach it before them. On the British side, Hill's, Craufurd's, and Bowes's brigades had

¹ Wellesley in his despatch says thirteen, and is naturally followed by Napier and Mr. Oman; but Colonel Robe's return (printed in *Evidence of Court of Enquiry*, p. 327) shows fourteen actually brought in and eight more reported taken. Moore's *Journal*, ii. 258, calls the number fifteen, which is not unlikely to be correct. The point shows how difficult it is to obtain accurate accounts even of details so simple as the number of captured guns.

1808. not fired a shot, and the remainder were flushed with Aug. 21. victory. Hill, Fane, and Anstruther could therefore move at once upon Torres Vedras and Montechique to cut off Junot from Lisbon, while Wellesley with the rest of the troops followed up the routed French army.

The movement, in Wellesley's hands, would doubtless have been successful, and the opportunity was a great one ; but none the less Burrard ordered the whole army to halt. His reasons for forbidding Wellesley's advance on the previous day—difficulty of supplies and want of cavalry—now seemed to him to be doubly serious, and not wholly without cause. The British cavalry after its losses in the action was weaker than ever, and the transport had suffered hardly less seriously. The attack upon Vimeiro Hill had caused a panic among the native carters. One of them had been killed ; three more had been wounded ; and the rest, very pardonably, had done their utmost to escape, with or without their teams and vehicles. Several had been stopped, but fifty empty carts had disappeared, and over one hundred and twenty were required to take the wounded to hospital ; so that, with one mishap and another, not above half of the transport of the army was at disposal for an advance.¹ Again, even if every driver, cart, and animal had been ready and able to move, there had been barely sufficient transport for the army, even before the landing of the brigades of Anstruther and Acland. Then also the British artillery-horses were hardly able to crawl, and Burrard was not to be persuaded that Junot had not still a reserve of troops in hand. And here, in a sense, he was right ; for, though Wellesley was correct in believing that Junot had not another man to throw into the fight that day, he had always underrated

¹ Mr. Oman accepts Wellesley's statement that he had twelve days' bread in camp on the 21st ; but the Commissary's evidence shows that there were only eight days' bread in the camp on that day. Wellesley had left the brigades of Anstruther and Acland out of his reckoning ; though it is true that the men of those brigades landed with three days' rations on their backs.

the total number of the French soldiers in Portugal.¹ 1808. Wellesley did his best to combat these arguments, and Aug. 21. was seconded by a message from Ferguson begging to be allowed to advance ; for the whole of Solignac's brigade in its flight had pent itself hopelessly into a ravine, where it could not escape capture if the British chose to close round it. Burrard frankly admitted later on that he did not understand how desperate was the situation of this brigade.² No doubt he spoke the truth ; but in any case he refused permission to Ferguson to move ; and General Thiébault, assuming command of the remnants of the battalions of Brennier and Solignac, led them safely away to rejoin the main body under Junot. That General also took advantage of the delay to re-form his troops and retire upon Torres Vedras, meeting on the road the two battalions which he had summoned from Lisbon.

Such was the battle of Vimeiro, a great victory marred by the failure to follow it up. That thirteen thousand French should have failed to drive eighteen thousand British from a strong position, was nothing very discreditable to the defeated side or honourable to their opponents ; but it must be admitted that Junot treated his troops shamefully, throwing them away by driblets in a series of disconnected attacks, which enabled his adversary to meet them always with superior numbers. That his men fought gallantly enough is shown by their resolute advance almost to the muzzles of the guns on Vimeiro Hill ; but their shock-tactics were hopeless against the missile-tactics of the British, except among the alleys and houses of the village, and even there they failed. In truth, the thirteen battalions of the French were beaten by twelve battalions of the British, practically with no difficulty whatever. The

¹ Lord Moira, the ablest officer who sat on the Court of Enquiry, declared in the House of Lords that he could not make up his mind whether Burrard was right or wrong in forbidding the advance, but on the whole thought he was judicious. *H.D.*, vol. xii. pp. 108, 112.

² *Evidence of Court of Enquiry*, p. 206.

1808. losses of the enemy were very severe, being, by their
Aug. 21. own admission, eighteen hundred, of whom a very large proportion were killed, and from three to four hundred were unwounded prisoners. The British casualties amounted to four officers and one hundred and thirty-one men killed, thirty-seven officers and four hundred and ninety-seven men wounded, two officers and forty-nine men missing, making seven hundred and twenty altogether. The regiments that suffered most severely were the Fiftieth with eighty-nine casualties ; the Forty-third with one hundred and eighteen ; and the Seventy-first with one hundred and twelve. Even so, there was not one battalion that was not fit for more work, had Burrard but consented to pursue. It can only be said for that unfortunate man that he acted according to the best of his judgment ; that Colonels Murray and Clinton, both of them afterwards distinguished under Wellington's command, strongly supported him ; and that he was in a most unfair position. For, had he acted on Wellesley's advice and had all gone well, Wellesley would have received the credit ; but, if anything had gone wrong, he himself would have been held to blame.

Aug. 22. His term of command was short, so that he had no opportunity of atoning for his mistake. Early on the following morning Sir Hew Dalrymple landed, and took counsel of the two Generals who had preceded him in command. Dalrymple was not at his ease. He had never served as a General officer in the field, nor had he seen active operations since 1794 ; so that he had little reliance upon himself. Moreover, looking to his recent relations with Ministers, to their long neglect of his good work in connection with the Spanish patriots at Gibraltar, their sudden recognition of his zeal and ability when appointing him temporarily to command in Portugal, and Castlereagh's effusive recommendation of Wellesley's merits, he did not trust the sincerity of the Cabinet. Wellesley at once laid his plans before Dalrymple and pressed him to advance.

He wished Sir John Moore's corps, which had arrived 1808. off the coast, to march to Santarem and cut off Junot's ^{Aug. 22.} retreat across the Tagus, while the main army should turn the position of Torres Vedras by moving along the coast to Mafra. He judged, probably with perfect correctness, that Junot would not dare to assail him on the march, while, if the French retired towards Lisbon before him, they would have to fight a rearguard action with a demoralised army, and with Lisbon in insurrection at their backs. Dalrymple, however, was not disposed, after a few hours' command of a strange army in a strange country, to risk an operation so hazardous as a march past the flank of an enemy in position. He therefore decided not to move until the morrow, and then not upon Mafra but upon Torres Vedras. His interview with Wellesley seems not to have been pleasant. The two men had never set eyes on each other before; and Wellesley withdrew with the feeling that he did not possess the confidence of his chief—indeed that Dalrymple “was prejudiced against any opinions that he might give him.”

A few hours later, however, there was an alarm of the enemy's approach, and presently two troops of dragoons appeared escorting General Kellermann with a flag of truce. In deep depression Junot early on that morning had called a Council of War, which had decided to make overtures to the British for the French evacuation of Portugal under a convention. Dalrymple received the overtures of Kellermann with a readiness of welcome which was more natural than politic, and summoned Burrard and Wellesley to advise. Wellesley without hesitation recommended the acceptance of the offer. The great opportunity for making an end of the French army had passed; and the immediate and bloodless recovery of Lisbon, with its consequent release of the British troops for operations in Spain, was worth far more than the capture of Junot's force after a long siege and heavy losses. It was arranged that there should be forty-eight hours' suspension of hostilities,

1808. and that, as a basis for a definite treaty, the French
Aug. 22. should not be considered as prisoners of war and should
be carried back to France in British ships ; and an
agreement to this effect was signed, against his better
judgment, by Wellesley on behalf of the British.
These preliminaries having been settled, Colonel Murray
Aug. 23. was despatched early on the 23rd to communicate
the terms to Sir Charles Cotton, Dalrymple being
determined that no definite convention with Junot
should be concluded without the Admiral's concurrence.
On the same day the army advanced to Ramalhal ; and
there occurred the incident which was the chief cause
of all the subsequent trouble.

Dalrymple had not long been installed in his new
headquarters before he was visited by General Bernardin
Freire. This officer expressed great indignation that
the Junta of Oporto, which he considered to be the
Government of Portugal, and himself also had not been
consulted in the negotiations of the preceding day ;
and he asked the British commander for a copy of the
armistice. Dalrymple, who had never even heard of
Freire, explained that no offence was intended, but that
he did not accept the Junta of Oporto as the Govern-
ment of Portugal. However, in order to show his good-
will, he furnished Freire with a copy of the armistice,
and agreed that a Portuguese officer, Ayres Pinto da
Sousa, should be attached to his quarters to watch over
Portuguese interests during the progress of the negotia-
tions. Very foolishly and wrongly, Sir Hew omitted to
send to England a report of this or of any of his pro-
ceedings after his landing. For a week the parley was
protracted, Junot pretending that the Russian fleet should
be included in the agreement, and the British Admiral
firmly insisting that it should not. Finally Junot gave way;

Aug. 31. and on the 31st of August, Dalrymple, having submitted
the terms to his Lieutenant-generals Burrard, Moore,
Hope, and Mackenzie Fraser, with their approval signed
the definitive agreement, misnamed the Convention of
Cintra. The purport of its conditions was as follows :—

The French were to evacuate Portugal with their arms, baggage, artillery, and "private property." They were to be embarked at Lisbon, with the exception of the garrison of Almeida, which was to embark at Oporto, they were to be conveyed to any port between Rochefort and Lorient, and they were to be free to serve after disembarkation. Commissioners were to be appointed to carry out the arrangements, and any article which seemed to be of doubtful meaning was to be construed favourably to the French army.

These articles, so far as they concerned the British and French armies only, were unobjectionable except that they allowed the French latitude to claim their plunder as their property. But the French garrison in the fortress of Elvas was blockaded by a Spanish force under General Galluzzo, and that of Almeida by Portuguese Militia; and as the Governments neither of Spain or Portugal were parties to the agreement, they might reasonably refuse to abide by it. Moreover, there were two political articles which lay open to the same criticism. The first of these guaranteed protection of person and property to all subjects of France or of her allies domesticated in Portugal, one year being granted to them to dispose of their effects and leave the country if they preferred to do so. The other provided that natives of Portugal should not be held accountable for their political conduct during the French occupation, but should enjoy the same privileges as the French subjects above named, under the protection of the British commanders. In other words, such Portuguese as had embraced the French side were not to suffer for it. It must, however, be remarked that neither da Sousa nor Freire would offer any opinion upon these articles, although especially invited by Dalrymple to do so.¹

Accordingly on the 2nd of September the forts on the Tagus were occupied by the Buffs and Forty-second, who were landed by Admiral Cotton for that purpose; and on the following day, but not before, Sept. 3.

¹ *Court of Enquiry*, p. 423.

1808. Dalrymple sent home his report, dated from Cintra, of all that had passed since he had taken over the command. The substitution of British for French gunners in the forts obliged the Russian Admiral to surrender his ships to Cotton, on condition that they should be held in deposit by England until six months after the conclusion of peace between the Governments of the two contracting parties, and that the officers and crews

Sept. 9. should be at once transported to Russia. On the 9th British troops of the main army marched into Lisbon, and the campaign of Portugal came to an end.

CHAPTER XXI

FROM the narrative of the negotiations conducted by 1808. Dalrymple it is now necessary to return to his army. Its slow and unopposed march upon Lisbon after the armistice is a matter of no interest; but the same is not true of its internal condition, which from the moment that Dalrymple took charge of the force, changed seriously for the worse. The new General had never enjoyed the slightest experience of high command, and was hopelessly at a loss when he found himself actually entrusted with the direction of an army in the field. It may indeed be urged in his excuse that he landed at a crisis when every moment was precious, that before he set foot on shore he had no knowledge, nor the slightest chance of gaining any knowledge, of the situation past and present in Portugal; and that he was required to decide in five minutes upon questions of vital importance, the intricacies of which could not easily have been mastered in five days. It is true also that, before so much even as one morning had been granted to him to ascertain the necessary details concerning his army, his attention was diverted entirely to the negotiations for a convention. These difficulties, for which not he but the British Government was responsible, placed him in a cruelly unfair position; and yet it is certain that his incompetence at the head of an army was very great. He had no idea how to work with the several departments of his staff; the confusion at his headquarters was incredible; the troops of course suffered in consequence; and there was general grumbling and dis-

1808. content. Burrard, after a few hours of command, had relapsed into nonentity. Every one, as was natural, came for orders and directions to Wellesley, the chief who had led them so well, and he did as much as his very invidious situation permitted; but what Wellesley could not do was not done at all.

Nor did the arrival of Moore improve matters. His division, after beginning to land at Mondego Bay on the 22nd of August, had been ordered to re-embark and proceed to Maceira Bay, where it disembarked, not

Aug. 25. without great difficulty and some loss, between the 25th and the 30th. Moore himself had written a letter of congratulation to Wellesley upon his victories, and had received a grateful reply, urging him to hasten to headquarters and use his influence to turn those victories to account. Moore arrived on the 25th, on which day there seemed to be some chance of resumption of hostilities, and, waiving his own rights as senior officer, urged upon Dalrymple that Wellesley should have the command of any force that might be detached for further operations. The other Lieutenant-generals, senior to Wellesley, John Hope, Mackenzie Fraser, and Lord Paget, who had arrived with Moore, also insisted on standing aside in order that Wellesley might retain command of his division. This cannot have been pleasing to Dalrymple, for it is certain that he and Wellesley took a dislike to each other at once. Wellesley appears to have expected that Dalrymple would take Castlereagh's hint immediately, and allow himself to be ruled by his subordinate. "I think," he wrote, "that I could have been of as much use to him, as I believe I have been to other officers under whose orders I have served. He is the only one of whom I have not been the right hand for some years past; and at the same time I must say that I felt the same inclination to serve him as I had to serve the others." Dalrymple, however, exercised his undoubted right to choose his advisers for himself, and he did not choose Wellesley. He was influenced, perhaps, partly by sheer prejudice

against the nominee of Castlereagh, who so far had 1808. treated him with little consideration, partly by an idea that Wellesley, when suggesting to him so dangerous a manœuvre as a flank march for his first operation, had wished to get him into trouble. Be that as it may, the two men did not love each other, nor try to dissemble their feelings. Dalrymple arranged that troops of Moore's corps should be the first to enter and occupy the forts of Lisbon, which naturally gave great offence to Wellesley's men, and must have been intended as a slight upon their commander. Wellesley's General Officers promptly responded by sending him on the 3rd of September a piece of plate, together with a flattering letter signed by every one of them. Three days later this compliment was supplemented by a similar offering from Generals Anstruther and Acland and the field-officers of the army which had fought at Vimeiro. Wellesley for his own part was so much annoyed at the whole turn of affairs that he forgot his usual self-command. He wrote letters in somewhat querulous and contemptuous terms both of Dalrymple and Burrard, not only to Castlereagh and the Duke of Richmond at home, but to naval and military officers and diplomatic agents on the spot. "I do not know what Sir Hew Dalrymple proposes to do or is instructed to do," he wrote on the 3rd of September to the Duke of Richmond, "but if I were in his situation I should have twenty thousand men at Madrid in less than a month from this time." Yet two days later he confessed that he had not the slightest knowledge of the means, numbers, or positions either of the French or the Spanish armies in Spain. Moreover, Wellesley was worried by the knowledge that he had been guilty of a foolish act in signing the original armistice, against his own judgment, in order to oblige Dalrymple. His best friends considered it a mistake; and he himself admitted that it could not be justified except on the ground of tactful deference towards a newly appointed superior. Before the Convention had been signed, he wrote that he

1808. longed to leave the army. A week later he declared that it was impossible for him to stay with it, and after yet a few days he was lamenting that he had ever left Ireland.

Sept. 17. Finally, in despair he wrote to Moore on the 17th of September saying that things could not go on after their present fashion, that the Commander-in-chief must be changed, and that the Army looked to Moore himself as the man who ought to be appointed. Being aware, moreover, that Moore's relations with Ministers were unpleasant, he tendered his good offices to put an end to the misunderstanding and to bring about a reconciliation. This was a strong measure; being neither more nor less than an overture from one inferior officer to another to compass the removal of the Commander-in-chief. Had Wellesley known of Moore's treatment of such matters in Egypt, he would have been more guarded in his language; but, as it happened, no harm was done. Moore was surprised, though somewhat touched, for his acquaintance with Wellesley was slight, and he had seen little of him since joining the army in Portugal; and, moreover, Wellesley was as certainly the favourite of Ministers as he himself was the reverse. He consented to see Wellesley, and the two men accordingly met. With regard to Dalrymple, Moore was firm. He had as low an opinion of that officer as Wellesley himself; but the Government had appointed Sir Hew, and the Government must remove him; and he would enter into no intrigue on the subject. As to his difference with Ministers, he had spoken his mind to them with full knowledge of the consequences; he would make no advances to them and no submission. But if Wellesley would explain to Castlereagh that Moore felt no bitterness nor ill-will, and if Wellesley could remove any evil impression made upon Ministers which might prevent Moore from obtaining employment, then Moore would gratefully acknowledge the kindness. In spite of all remonstrances, Sir Arthur could obtain no further concessions from Sir John than these,

and he promised that he would report no more than he 1808. had been authorised to say. This was the first meeting of any intimacy between the two men, and it was fated to be the last. They seem to have parted with increase of esteem on both sides ; and on the following day Wellesley returned to England, which Moore was never to see again.

Meanwhile Dalrymple was fully occupied with the business of arranging for the future employment of the army, and for the government of Portugal. On the 3rd of September there reached him from home a despatch, undated and unsigned, but evidently emanating from Castlereagh, with instructions upon both of these points. As to future operations Castlereagh announced that ten thousand additional troops would shortly embark from England ; and Dalrymple was required to inform himself and to report as to the sphere in which it would be most profitable to employ a total force of thirty to forty thousand men. But not content with this, Castlereagh suggested at great length a variety of operations depending upon a still greater variety of hypothetical conditions. The plans between which he halted may, for our purposes, be reduced to two : namely, whether the British should advance from Portugal into Spain and join the Spanish in opposing the French in front ; or whether they should go by sea to Asturias and fall upon the French in flank and rear. Castlereagh frankly confessed in this letter that he had no information which could determine him how to make the most profitable use either of the troops in Portugal or of those at home, and he accordingly left it to Dalrymple's "excellent judgment" to do as he thought best without any orders from Whitehall. Why, therefore, he should have bewildered the General with "a letter consisting chiefly of queries and speculations," as a friendly critic called it, is not easy to explain ; for the information required for a full answer to it could not have been collected in less than several weeks. Dalrymple, however, acted with sense and judgment. He at once sent

1808. Lord William Bentinck to Madrid to consult the Spanish Generals, and General Anstruther to Almeida to superintend the evacuation of that fortress and to make enquiry as to the route into Spain. He also wrote to Castaños, the one Spanish General whom he knew well, in the hope that he was at Madrid, and asked how the British force could be most usefully employed.¹

Castaños, as we shall presently see, was not at Madrid ; but a letter arrived from him, crossing that of Dalrymple, wherein he begged for two thousand British cavalry, and reported that, owing to provincial disputes, half of the army which he had led at Baylen had been withdrawn from his command. This was an unpleasant symptom, which showed itself again in the form of urgent applications for help from both Valencia and Aragon. None of the provinces, in fact, thought of any needs but their own. In his embarrassment Dalrymple showed Castlereagh's letter to Moore, who declared that, without knowledge of the Spanish plans and perfect concert with the Spanish Generals, it was impossible to determine where or how the army should act ; and Moore added privately in his journal that the letter was "plausible, verbose nonsense," which unfortunately was not far from the truth. In answer, therefore, to Castlereagh, Dalrymple wrote in effect that the operations of a British army against the French front must depend upon the readiness of the Spaniards to accept its aid, the quality of the Spanish troops, and the degree of unison between them ; while independent operations against the French flank must equally depend upon the dispositions of the French themselves, for it was not to be expected that they would sit still at Burgos and allow the British to land at their ease in Asturias to threaten their communications. These reflections of Dalrymple were so commonplace that they may be thought superfluous ;

¹ The authorities for these last paragraphs are *Wellington Desp.* iv. 115, 119, 126, 133, 136, 141, 147, 152 ; *Suppl. Desp.* vi. 122, 125-128, 133, 135 ; *Diary of Sir John Moore*, ii. 253-266.

but they were all that could be offered in reply to such 1808. a letter as Castlereagh had written.¹

About a fortnight later a second despatch, dated the 2nd of September, came to Dalrymple's hands, showing that the Government had made up its mind, more or less, as to future operations. The General was to hold twenty thousand men, or as large a proportion of his force as could safely be spared, in readiness to be detached to the north of Spain upon the receipt of directions from England, in order to co-operate with the Spaniards in expelling the French. Twelve thousand more were to be prepared to join them from England. If such employment of his force should seem advisable to him, Dalrymple was at liberty to take action without further instructions ; but a saving clause indicated that this policy was subject to change upon the receipt of later information by the Government. Upon the whole, the General decided that in any case the expeditionary force would probably be moved to its destination by sea, since Castlereagh's first despatch had showed a preference for Asturias as the scene of its operations. Nor was he at fault in his judgment, for Arthur Wellesley, as shall be seen, upon reading that same despatch, had declared likewise that Asturias was the proper quarter to which the army should be transferred. Dalrymple therefore thought himself not justified in spending large sums upon the purchase of transport-animals or the establishment of magazines for an advance by land, though he made arrangements for the supply of provisions to small bodies of troops passing through Portugal by different routes. Furthermore, the reports which he had received of the disposition of the Spanish armies, the quarrels of their commanders, and their habit of playing each for his own hand, were such as to convince him that the co-operation of a British army with them would be neither safe nor expedient. Here again his judgment was undoubtedly

¹ Dalrymple's *Memoir of his Proceedings, etc.*, pp. 99-105; *Wellington Suppl. Desp.* vi. 131; *Diary of Sir John Moore*, ii. 261.

1808. sound ; but, at the same time, Dalrymple's temperament was such that an army under his direction would never have been ready to go anywhere or do anything in the field. He had worked far too long in an office to possess enterprise, energy, or resource ; and the result was that he found excellent reasons for deferring all preparations for a campaign in Spain.

It must be admitted, meanwhile, that the General's hands were sufficiently full of other matters. Apart from the innumerable affairs which daily required adjustment with the Portuguese,¹ there were difficulties over the construction of the article of the Convention which gave to the French their private property. With the shameless rapacity which had infected the armies of France from the beginning of the Revolutionary wars, Junot's officers endeavoured to carry off all the plunder which they had gathered in Portugal, and needed to be checked with a very strong hand. The Portuguese, as was natural, took a lively interest in these proceedings ; and General Freire, Sousa, and others, whose ambitious projects had been foiled by Dalrymple's refusal to recognise them as the legitimate governors of Portugal, spared no effort to rouse national feeling against the Convention. Fortunately the methods of these persons were so clumsy that Dalrymple had little difficulty in penetrating their design. Carefully maintaining silence during the progress of the negotiation, Freire and Sousa broke out, as soon as it was concluded, into loud protests and remonstrances, with such reflections upon British honour and good faith that Dalrymple, after bearing with them for a time with patience and temper, abruptly closed the correspondence. This silenced the representatives of the Junta of Oporto ; but meanwhile a new aspirant to importance came forward in the person of the Count of Castro Marino, Monteiro Mor,

¹ His successor, Burrard, complained a month later that the pressure of civil business prevented him from giving as much time as he ought to his military duties. Burrard to Sec. of State, 15th Oct. 1808.

or Master of the Horse, and President of the Junta of 1808. Algarve, who likewise protested against the embarkation of the French and the execution of the Convention. Another difficulty arose with the Spanish General Galluzzo, whose troops were blockading Elvas, and who had made considerable profit by treating Portugal as a hostile country. Such a man was naturally opposed to the Convention, since the evacuation of Elvas by the French would deprive him of an excuse for robbery and plunder; and Dalrymple, after trying civil remonstrances in vain, was obliged to send up an entire division of British troops to awe Galluzzo into obedience. This measure proved effectual; and the Spanish leader withdrew his undisciplined levies into Spain.

Lastly came the most trying task of all, the establishment of a new Regency for the government of Portugal. Castlereagh's instructions¹ had warned Sir Hew that several members of the old Regency were suspected of being in the French interest, and that they must not be permitted to return to power. If, therefore, these persons should attempt to resume their former rule, he was to declare the authority of the Regency to be of no effect, and was to form a new Regency in Lisbon, as nearly resembling the old as possible; failing which he was himself to assume the Government in the Regent's name, as a provisional arrangement. But before these instructions were despatched, Ministers had sent a Hanoverian officer, Baron van der Decken, to Oporto, pursuant to a policy, of which more shall presently be said, of attaching a British officer to the headquarters of the principal provincial Juntas in the Peninsula. The Bishop of Oporto at once informed Decken upon his arrival that, though he had assumed the Government of Portugal to satisfy the people, he thought it his duty to resign his powers to the Regency appointed by the Prince Regent before the departure of the Royal Family for Brazil. Decken thereupon represented that certain members of the Regency had

¹ Castlereagh to Dalrymple, 19th Aug. 1808.

1808. taken office under Junot, and pressed the Bishop to retain the Government in his own hands. The Bishop professed reluctance; but Decken, being persuaded that he would yield if the British Government urged him, with amazing confidence requested Dalrymple to write a letter to the Bishop which would serve the purpose. Moreover, before the General could reply, he forwarded to him a list of a new Government, including the Bishop's half-brother who had actually accepted office under Junot, and intimated that the seat of Government would be Oporto. These letters met Dalrymple upon his landing, together with a missive from the Junta of Oporto itself, claiming the right to instal the old Regency after due exclusion of undesirable members. The members insisted also that the Bishop himself should be appointed to the Regency, and that, if the restored Government should be interrupted by invasion or any other cause, then the Junta of Oporto should resume its sovereign position.

No great insight was needed to perceive that the Bishop was working entirely for his own advantage, to say nothing of the absurdity of making a provincial city the seat of Government instead of Lisbon. The General lost no time in bringing Decken to his senses by a sharp rebuke; and reasoned out the position for himself. The Prince Regent of Portugal had nominated a Regency of five persons, besides a sixth, the Count of Castro Marino, who was to fill the first vacancy; and he had further ordained that future vacancies should be filled by suffrage of the remaining members. This had been reported by Strangford to the British Government, but, probably owing to the usual friction between the Foreign Office and War Office, had evidently not been imparted to Castlereagh. Of the five original persons, two were still admissible besides the Count of Castro Marino; and it was easy to call upon them to reassume their functions and fill the two vacancies. But it was necessary that all provincial juntas should be subject to them, and that, at the same time, these bodies should be

conciliated by the admission of their chief members 1808. to the Regency. The Junta of Algarve was already represented by its President, Castro Marino, and it was obvious that only the Bishop could represent that of Oporto. Dalrymple therefore by proclamation Sept. 15. invited the three legitimate members of the Regency to re-enter office, and called upon all other administrative bodies to obey them. He also arranged that the Bishop should be elected, and with some difficulty persuaded him to accept the position. With the election of the Marquis of Las Minas the Regency was complete. The various provincial juntas dissolved themselves, and Portugal was once more united under a single central Government.

But though Dalrymple might flatter himself that he had broken the power of the Junta of Oporto, he little thought that the Bishop and Freire had already prepared their revenge. No sooner had Freire received his copy of the armistice than he sent it at once to M. de Sousa, the Portuguese Minister in London, accompanied by a violent and singularly unveracious commentary of his own. As fate willed it, the letter had a quick passage, and de Sousa was able to present it to Canning, with an unpleasant note, on the 3rd of September, only a few hours after the publication of the Gazette containing the despatch concerning Roliça and Vimeiro. Ministers were struck with consternation. They had remonstrated with Spain over the favourable terms granted by Castaños to Dupont at Baylen; yet now they were confronted with a parallel example of complaisance manifested by their own generals to Junot; and, worst of all, the incriminating document bore the signature of their favourite Wellesley. They were inclined to disbelieve the whole story at first; but, owing to Dalrymple's neglect, they had no report from their own side to set against Sousa's. Castlereagh for once became almost hysterical, and wrote wildly to his brother about the concessions granted to ten thousand despairing French by fifty thousand British

1808. and Portuguese. Canning, even after the arrival of the definitive Convention, could not speak of it except as a most calamitous transaction, and, against the opinion of the majority of the Cabinet, wished to repudiate it altogether. In fact, the whole nation lost its head. People had assumed from Wellesley's despatches that the entire French army of Portugal had been defeated at Vimeiro, whereas little more than half of it had been present; and from such a height as this the fall to the Convention was great indeed. They made no distinction between the armistice and the Convention; even Castlereagh wrote to Wellesley that, after the receipt of the Convention, he was still unable to reconcile himself to the event. The Bishop of Oporto's version of affairs had laid hold upon all minds, and was not to be expelled. Brutal caricatures were issued and brutal paragraphs written in the newspapers; Wellesley, as the officer who had signed the armistice, being held up to particular reprobation. Even a full month after the event the Corporation of London actually addressed the King and adjured him, in language which suggests that they and not the army had fought at Vimeiro, to mete out due punishment to the guilty parties. Officers in Portugal on receiving the British newspapers were astonished and amused to find that the Convention of Cintra had caused a greater storm of indignation even than the disaster at Buenos Ayres.¹

It was plain that only a Court of Enquiry could still the popular outcry; and it will be convenient to anticipate matters and to finish the story of the Convention at once. Dalrymple was recalled without delay, and the command was left for a time to Burrard, who was recalled in his turn at the end of October in order to be present at the Enquiry. The Court consisted of seven Generals, Sir David Dundas being President, and Generals Lord Moira, Peter Craig, Lord Heathfield, Lieutenant-generals Sir George

¹ *Castlereagh Corres.* vi. 421, 441, 455; *Diary of Sir John Moore*, ii. 267.

Nugent, Lord Pembroke, and Oliver Nicholls, whom we saw long ago at Grenada, the members. The proceedings opened on the 19th of November; the hearing of evidence occupied seven days, and on the 23rd of December the Court delivered its judgment that no one was to blame for what had occurred, and that there was no occasion for a court-martial. The Duke of York, dissatisfied with this conclusion, pressed for the approval or disapproval of each member with respect to the expediency first of the armistice, and next of the Convention. Six out of seven approved the armistice, and four out of seven the Convention. Lord Pembroke and General Nicholls disapproved of the Convention on the ground that, after Moore's reinforcement joined the army, Dalrymple should have insisted on better terms. Lord Moira, probably the ablest soldier in the army after Wellesley and Moore, condemned both armistice and Convention, upon the ground that it was not sufficient to drive the French from Portugal without inflicting upon them the greatest possible amount of damage.

As generally happens on such occasions, the strictly human and personal elements, which had really brought about the whole course of events, were entirely ignored. The Court did indeed record its opinion that, if the command-in-chief of an army changes hands twice in the course of twenty-four hours, it is not surprising that the army itself should remain halted for forty-eight hours. The members did not think it unreasonable in Burrard that, after being on shore for just three hours and knowing nothing of his men, of the enemy, or the country, he refused to pursue a beaten foe, who was strong in cavalry, with no more than a hundred dragoons of his own. They did not think it unreasonable in Dalrymple that, after only three hours on shore and in the same ignorance as Burrard, he declined to risk a flank-march past the enemy's lines. But they could not with seemliness elucidate the fact that Dalrymple, knowing, as he could not but know,

1808. that he was only placed in command temporarily to cover some mysterious design of the Government in Wellesley's favour, was anxious to close the campaign and be quit of the business as soon as possible. Nor could any one call evidence to prove the truth, accepted by every one but Dalrymple himself, that any Convention was preferable to his direction of an army in the field.

However, the affair could not end with the Court of Enquiry. The true blame for the whole misadventure lay with Ministers; but the circumstances demanded a scapegoat, for it was necessary to allay the wrath and anticipate the remonstrances that were to be expected of Spain and Portugal. There could be no doubt as to the victim who should be selected. It could not be Wellesley, for the wreck of his career would have been a national misfortune. It could not be Burrard, for he had signed neither armistice nor Convention, and had at most been guilty of purely military errors of judgment; there was every probability that, even if he had followed Wellesley's advice after Vimeiro, the movement would have been checked by Dalrymple; and lastly, it was impossible for any one to feel unkindly towards Burrard. Dalrymple, therefore, was appointed for the sacrifice; and was compelled to undergo the injustice which the common welfare in such cases so cruelly demands. He had proposed to lay before the Court documents which would show the intrigues of the Junta of Oporto and prove that the outcry against the Convention, alike in England, Portugal, and Spain, was factitious; but he was informed that this was not material to the enquiry. He had likewise intended to put in evidence Castlereagh's letter of the 20th of August, granting him unfettered discretion, speaking of his "excellent judgment," and assuring him of the cordial support of the Cabinet. But even Castlereagh's courage shrank from the publication of this letter, which was therefore also suppressed as immaterial. Finally, a severe public

rebuke was addressed in the King's name to Dalrymple, 1808. not only, as he well deserved, for his omission to report at once the signature of the armistice, but also for his admission into the Convention of the political articles respecting French residents and native partisans of the French in Portugal. In these articles, it was said, "stipulations were made affecting the interests and feelings of the Spanish and Portuguese nations"; and therefore they were improper and dangerous in a military Convention. Nothing, however, is more certain than that such provisions frequently find a place in instruments of this nature. It was hardly to be expected that Junot should abandon his countrymen, and those of the Portuguese who had sympathised with them, to the tender mercies of the populace of Lisbon. There was no Spanish Government and no Portuguese Government whom Dalrymple could consult on such matters; and it would have been absurd to refer them to Downing Street and to await the arrival of a civil official from England. This censure upon Sir Hew was demonstrably the work of Canning; and was in fact intended as a sop to Spain and Portugal. There was no ill-feeling in the matter, for Canning thought highly of Dalrymple's capacity for civil business; but it was absolutely necessary to punish some one spontaneously for the blunders of the Ministry, before the representatives of Spain and Portugal should demand such punishment as their right.

Sound political instinct dictates that, when a scapegoat shall once have been chosen, the greater the load of sins that can be heaped upon his back the better. Dalrymple's case was no exception to this rule. The House of Commons called for the Admiralty's records concerning the negotiations; and occasion was taken to present to Parliament some spurious enclosures, whereby Admiral Cotton was represented as having objected to certain stipulations in the Convention, which as a matter of fact he had not only approved but originated. The newspapers at once raised a chorus

1808. of eulogy upon Cotton at the expense of Dalrymple ; and although, upon the General's remonstrance, the true documents were laid before the House of Lords, the mischief could not be undone ; for newspapers, being infallible, can never recant. Meanwhile Sir Hew was removed from the Government of Gibraltar, and was relegated to obscurity and disgrace. Not until after Napoleon had fallen in 1814 was Dalrymple able to obtain a hearing for his complaints ; when, in some compensation for the hard treatment which he had endured, a baronetcy was conferred upon him for his public services. It must not be supposed that Ministers lacked sympathy with him and with his fellow-sufferers. Castlereagh felt keenly for the misfortunes which his own fault had brought upon all of them, and doubtless regretted it to his dying day. And it is to be remarked that all this trouble to the country, all this injustice to three deserving men and honest servants of the public, arose from the original injustice done to John Moore. It was the animosity of Ministers against him which wrecked Wellesley's success ; and, if by the fortune of war Wellesley had met at first with failure, the rapid sequence of three commanders-in-chief, instead of only spoiling success, might very well have brought about disaster.

Summarising now the results of the operations during the summer of 1808, the success of the Spaniards and their allies is apparent. The French had been forced to evacuate Portugal ; while in Spain, after successive defeats at Baylen, before Valencia, Zaragoza, and Gerona, they had been driven back behind the line of the Ebro. Unfortunately the Spaniards took little advantage of their victories. After the success of Baylen, Castaños, though anxious to march at once upon Madrid, was recalled by the Junta of Seville to their capital, nominally to enjoy a triumphant reception, but in reality to be the instrument of their provincial spite. The Junta of Granada had refused to recognise them as the chief authority in

Andalusia ; and orders were actually issued to a ^{1808.} division of the army of Castaños to march against the Granadans and reduce them to submission. The General indignantly interposed to forbid any such wickedness, and his patriotic wrath prevailed ; but the Junta, thinking only of itself, refused for some time to allow him to march northward ; nor was it until the 23rd of August that he entered Madrid, and then only with a single division of seven thousand men. General Llamas had preceded him with a division of eight thousand men from Valencia ; and these were all the troops to be found in the capital three weeks after the withdrawal of the French. Yet Castaños at Baylen had commanded over thirty thousand men.

In the north of Spain there was the same provincial jealousy and selfishness. There, after the defeat of Medina de Rio Seco, the Juntas of Leon and Old Castile had amalgamated themselves with that of Galicia, under the presidency of Don Antonio Valdez ; and the trinity thus formed claimed civil supremacy in the northern provinces. Their authority was, however, wholly rejected by their neighbour Asturias, and also by General Cuesta, who, though his army had been reduced to a few thousand fugitives and his reputation had been utterly wrecked by the battle of Medina, still, with insensate arrogance, advanced pretensions of superiority to all juntas whatsoever. The army of Asturias, therefore, remained within its own borders ; that of Galicia, under the cautious Blake, moved no further eastward than Astorga ; and Cuesta, furiously jealous of Blake, kept such troops as he possessed apart in New Castile. The army of Aragon under Palafox, supplemented by a division of Valencians, alone followed up the retreating French and stood watching them on the Ebro. The provinces of Spain had won brilliant victories within their own borders ; but, through want of a supreme authority, the fruits of those victories had been suffered to perish.

Many men in Spain had seen the need for a central

1808. government ; and many aspirants, as we have seen, had presented themselves to fill the vacant place of Regent. Two of them, Leopold of Naples and Louis Philippe of Orleans, had been first in the field, but were suppressed with admirable firmness by Dalrymple. Don Pedro of Portugal, the son of the Prince Regent, was also suggested ; and Castaños and Palafox both thought of inviting the Archduke Charles of Austria. Then there was some talk of reviving the Cortes ; but this was impracticable without great electoral reforms. Moreover, such a body, even if revived, would have been unfit for work that demanded a dictator. At length, after some trouble, all the provinces agreed to the erection of a central authority under the title of the Supreme Junta. There were fresh wrangles over the seat of government, which was eventually fixed at Aranjuez ; and ultimately it was settled that each of the seventeen provincial juntas should send two deputies to the Supreme Junta, and the Canary Islands one, making in all thirty-five members. But all of these preliminary arrangements took time ; and the first meeting of the new governing body could not be fixed for an earlier day than the 25th of September. By that time eight weeks had elapsed since the French retreat to the Ebro ; the aspect of affairs was completely changed ; and a thousand pressing matters, which were awaiting settlement by a central government, were still fatally undecided.

Hardly less interested than Spain herself in the establishment of a government of some kind, which should represent the whole country, was her ally Great Britain ; for it was of vital importance to the latter to possess a single accredited agent who could concert arrangements with a single executive body. Early in July Canning had sent with Wellesley to Coruña Mr. Charles Stuart, the son of General Sir Charles Stuart and the heir to very much of his ability. Though he was the bearer of a loan of £200,000 to the Galician Junta, his instructions bade him to eschew entry into any political engagements, to discourage any idea of inviting British

agents to provincial capitals, to press for the formation of a central government, and to gather intelligence from all quarters. But, in the absence of a central government, the British Ministers were practically obliged to despatch representatives of some kind to the various provinces to superintend the distribution of money and arms, to report upon their condition and prospects, and to give advice as to their military operations. This last duty necessarily prescribed the employment of military officers as agents; and preference was reasonably given to such as could speak Spanish or had experience of the countries of Southern Europe. Asturias, being the first of the provinces to ask for British help, was naturally the first to receive some of these officers, their names being Colonel Sir Thomas Dyer, Major Roche, and Captain Patrick,¹ who arrived with a cargo of military stores at Gijon in the last days of June. A few days later Colonel Charles Doyle was despatched to Coruña in charge of a number of Spanish prisoners. In the south Dalrymple had already sent Captain Whittingham to the headquarters of Castaños, and Major Cox, a most intelligent officer, to the Junta of Seville. In July, therefore, the Government was already receiving a certain amount of information from its own agents both in the north and south of Spain.

Unfortunately the judgment of these gentlemen was not always equal to their zeal; and this was particularly true of Doyle. He was the Colonel who had led the Fourteenth Foot at Famars, an Irishman who to all the gallantry of his race added a very large share of its imaginative powers, an excessive element of enthusiasm, and, as a natural consequence, a singularly loose hold upon facts. On arriving at Coruña he at once fell into the arms of the Galician Junta, urged upon them the immediate convocation of the Cortes, and thought it reasonable that this latter assembly—which was to wield supreme authority in Spain—should meet together in

¹ Their instructions were dated 19th June. *Castlereagh Corres.* vi. 371.

1808. that remote province. By the 2nd of August Doyle was quite satisfied that the Cortes would be speedily convened. He then hurried to Blake at Astorga, feeling assured that the armies of Castaños and Galluzzo were advancing upon Madrid, whereas the one was at Seville and the other before Elvas. There he did not hesitate to ask for two thousand British cavalry to be landed at Coruña in order to act in the field with Blake's army. Every necessary article, so he averred, would be in readiness for this force at different stages on the road to Astorga—a promise which was singularly belied by subsequent events. He admitted that Blake's army was in want of everything, and that, strangely enough, it was in communication with no other of the Spanish armies, except the Asturian; but still he was sure that, if assisted by British cavalry, it would be very formidable. Next, Doyle persuaded Blake to send emissaries to rouse the people of Biscay to insurrection, and sketched out a singularly absurd plan for the General to lead part of his troops through the Biscayan mountains upon the rear of the French, while Castaños, who was still a fortnight's march from Madrid, should hold them in front. Then, hearing a bare rumour that sixteen thousand British troops were sailing from England to land in Galicia, he demanded the provision of quarters and victuals for them, without troubling himself for a moment to ascertain if the report were true or false.

While Doyle was staying with Blake, the Duke of Infantado arrived to inform himself of the General's intentions, the Duke being desirous of representing Blake at a Council of War to be held at Madrid. Doyle instantly flew off to Madrid with this gentleman and plunged headlong into intrigues for the appointment of Infantado as Regent and for manipulation of the Council of War. At the capital, according to his own account, he seems to have taken charge of everybody and everything. He prevailed with General Llamas to send troops to one place; he was unable to prevail with Castaños to send troops to another; he

restored public confidence in Blake ; he hoped to 1808. place Infantado at the head of the whole Spanish Army “ and pour all the different energies of the different provinces into one stream, the tide of which will be a torrent which will sweep away from the face of Spain the remnant of the French army.” Then he changed his mind about Infantado, and thought that Castaños would be a better Commander-in-chief. And so the honest fellow rambled on, fraternising with every Spaniard that he saw, believing every report that he heard, interposing in everybody’s business by day, writing rhapsodical letters, as heavily underscored as a woman’s, by night, sometimes a little damped by Spanish jealousies and Spanish apathy, sometimes inspired for a moment by sound military considerations, but for the most part sanguine, enthusiastic, and for purposes of accurate information absolutely useless.¹

Roche for his part betook himself to Gijon, and, though less sanguine, was little less busy than Doyle. He undertook to heal the feuds between Asturias and her neighbour the Montaña ; he offered to lead a force to surprise San Sebastian, and was much disgusted when the Junta of Oviedo refused to give him Spanish troops for the venture ; he exhausted himself in vain efforts to stir up the Montaña and Santander to fresh hostilities ; and he unfortunately succeeded only too well in encouraging the Biscayans, who so far had been overawed by the proximity of the French, into open insurrection. Patrick, who, like Roche, was continually moving between Santander and Gijon, appears to have worked to the same end. He, equally with Doyle, lent ready credence to a report that twenty thousand British were about to land in Galicia and Santander, and caused roads to be repaired and provisions to be collected against their arrival. Like Doyle again, he repeated the most extravagant reports, and sent them home without the slightest warning that

¹ Doyle to Sec. of State, 30th July, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 12th, 14th, 20th, 22nd, 25th, 28th Aug. 1808.

1808. they might be untrue. Gleams of sound sense pass occasionally athwart the letters of all three of these officers ; but one and all were deceived by the welcome granted to them as bearers of arms and money, and, instead of studying and reporting facts, preferred to play the more exciting part of insurrectionary leaders and advisers.¹

Within a very short time they, or at any rate some of them, succeeded in bringing about a disaster. The province of Biscay, stimulated by their teaching, rose in revolt against the French on the 6th of August, before a single Spanish soldier had entered Madrid from the south or had advanced to their support from Asturias. Marshal Bessières was able without difficulty to detach to Bilbao General Merle, who on the 16th dispersed the main body of the insurgents with very heavy loss, and, entering the city directly afterwards, was not sparing of plunder and violence. Roche arrived in the harbour to throw arms and stores into the city, just as the French approached ; and his ships had none too much time to escape from the river, with their cargoes fortunately still unlanded. The spirit of the Biscayans was broken ; the French were warned of the danger that might threaten them from that quarter ; and, in fact, every evil consequence followed that was to be expected from a premature rising.²

Finding that these young officers were taking upon themselves to direct armies, the British Government early in August sent General Leith to Asturias and General Brodrick to Coruña, to take these subordinates under their orders, and to gather detailed information respecting the actual condition and wants of the Spanish armies and the resources of the country. These gentlemen looked upon matters with a colder eye. Leith cordially condemned the folly at Biscay, and still more the lavish fashion in which Doyle and some of the civil

¹ Roche to Sec. of State, 2nd July, 1st, 8th, 12th, 14th Aug. ; Patrick to Sec. of State, 8th, 15th, 19th, 22nd Aug. 1808.

² Roche to Sec. of State, 18th Aug. ; Napier, i. 287-288.

British consuls had scattered money broadcast, without 1808. looking to the manner of its expenditure by the Spaniards. Brodrick, who at once joined Blake, found him singularly uncommunicative both as to his means and his wants, and came to the conclusion that the Junta of Galicia was chary of allowing its proceedings to be minutely examined. But both Leith and Brodrick came upon the scene too late to advise the British Ministers as to future operations ; for time pressed for a speedy decision, lest the fruits of the summer's successes should be thrown entirely away. Practically, therefore, the Cabinet had no military opinions upon that subject before it but those of Patrick, Roche, and Doyle.

Nevertheless they had a good commentary upon those opinions in the very sound and sensible letters of Stuart. He was confined at first to Galicia, from which he sent simple but telling reports of the inefficiency of the Junta, the dissensions, amounting almost to civil war, between it and ambitious persons who desired its subversion, and the quarrels of Blake and Cuesta. Then, pushing his enquiries further, Stuart was able to pronounce that Galicia was typical of all the Juntas, and to give the reasons for this. The Government of Spain, he explained, was everywhere in the hands of the provincial nobility or, as we should say in England, of the county gentry, aided by a few men who had held official positions at Madrid. Not a single man of rank, power, and riches in the capital had come forward ; and the most distinguished Generals equally hung back. The natural result was the prevalence of a strong local spirit, and a desire on the part of all Juntas that "the Cortes should be established by their own firesides." Hence the dissensions among the various armies were so great as to neutralise all personal bravery and enthusiasm. No province would lift a finger for its neighbour, and there was every prospect that the French would be able to crush each army in detail.

These opinions of Stuart were well and shrewdly formed ; and the British Government had also another

1808. adviser who, with practically no opportunity of observation, had, from sheer force of genius, penetrated to the heart of matters in Spain. This was Sir Arthur Wellesley, to whom, through his brother, Charles Stewart, Castlereagh had submitted a copy of the letter of queries and speculations which had been formally addressed to Dalrymple. And here may be noticed, in passing, the ambiguous conduct of the Secretary of State, who, while applauding the excellent judgment of Dalrymple, giving him full discretion and assuring him of the confidence of Ministers, none the less sought counsel, behind his back, of the subordinate whom they had placed under his orders. Wellesley, as was to be expected, treated the "plausible verbose nonsense" of his patron with greater respect than had Moore. Premising, however, that his information of the contending parties in Spain was very defective, he warned Castlereagh that none of the Spanish troops could be counted upon as effective except those of Castaños and Blake. The peasantry, who composed the remainder of the Spanish armies, were not to be relied on. In some cases, they might oppose the enemy successfully with equal numbers; in others, thousands would be dispersed by a handful of Frenchmen. On the other hand it was certain that the French would be heavily reinforced, and that they would make the defeat or destruction of any British army their first object in Spain. It would not, therefore, be safe to hazard the whole of England's disposable force in Spain, unless there could be assured to it a safe retreat to the sea. Upon this view, the only efficient plan of operations for a large British force would be that it should act from Asturias against the flank and rear of the French army, with its bases at Gijon and Santander.¹ To reach this sphere of action the British army in Portugal might move either by land or sea. By sea it would arrive at its destination more quickly; but, as there was no carriage-

¹ Wellesley to Castlereagh, 5th Sept. 1808; *Castlereagh Corres.* vi. 426.

road from the ports of Asturias over the mountains, 1808. the artillery could not be transported to the theatre of war on its existing carriages except by land.

Wellesley, it will be observed, was less cautious than Dalrymple in committing himself to the undigested schemes of the Cabinet. The plan of attack upon the French flank and rear from Asturias emanated in reality from Blake and Doyle; and Stuart, the civilian, had not failed to pass comment upon it. If, he wrote, British troops were landed at Santander, they must be dependent upon their own exertions, for they would obtain no assistance from the undisciplined insurgents of Biscay and Asturias; and, moreover, the proximity of the Biscayan coast to the French frontier would expose the British to attack from France itself as well as from Burgos. To bewilder the Cabinet still further, the Spanish deputies in London up to the very end of August deprecated the landing of any military force whatever in Spain. They considered their countrymen quite competent to drive the enemy across the Pyrenees unassisted, and, though they welcomed the action of a British army in Portugal, they desired no help from it within their own borders.¹

At the beginning of September, however, some change appeared in this attitude of the Spaniards. After infinite delay a certain number of their Generals had arrived at Madrid, and on the 5th of September five Sept. 5. of them met in Council of War. These were Castaños from Andalusia; Llamas from Valencia and Murcia; Infantado, who represented Blake and the Juntas of Galicia, Leon, and Castile; Calvo de Rozas, who represented Palafox and the army of Aragon; and, finally, Cuesta, who represented little but the extreme spirit of ignorance, selfishness, and discord. The important matter of appointing a Commander-in-chief of all the armies was left undecided. Cuesta proposed that the supreme direction should be concentrated in one hand;

¹ Stuart to Sec. of State, 7th, 9th, 18th Aug.; Sec. of State to Stuart, 30th Aug. 1808.

1808. and this in itself was sufficient to discredit the idea Sept. 5. with his colleagues, who rightly judged that it could only have commended itself to him upon selfish grounds. Moreover, though all might have agreed upon the necessity of such a step in theory, each thought that his services, his troops, and the importance of his province entitled himself, at any rate, to independence of a supreme authority. Doyle had written on the 31st of August that the army of Spain would in a few days certainly be under the command of one man ; but on the evening of the 5th of September he was obliged to confess that this most desirable end had not yet been attained.

However, though unable to agree about a Commander-in-chief, the Spanish Generals produced at least a plan of campaign. According to this, the army of Palafox on the extreme right, or east, was to occupy Tudela and the lower basin of the river Aragon ; Llamas's force was to join hands with him from Calahorra, a little higher up the Ebro ; Castaños was to concentrate at Soria, on the upper waters of the Douro ; Cuesta's men were to be at Osma ; and Blake's were to assemble at Reinosa,¹ about the head waters of the Ebro. The whole were to be divided into four armies, of the Right, Reserve, Centre, and Left. That of the Reserve under Palafox was to be made up of the Aragonese and of such Catalonian and Valencian troops as had joined them during the siege of Zaragoza. Its function was to manœuvre northwards round the French left flank towards Sanguessa. The army of the Centre was to consist of the Castilians, Andalusians, and Llamas's Valencians, under Castaños, and was to operate on the Ebro between Logroño and Tudela. The army of the Left under Blake was to include the Asturians, the Galicians, Romana's corps,

¹ Arteche, as Mr. Oman points out, gives Aranda de Duero as Blake's point of concentration. Toreno gives Reinosa ; Napier gives Palencia. Arteche's own account of the plan shows that Mr. Oman is correct in preferring Toreno's authority.

which, as shall presently be seen, was expected to 1808. return shortly from Denmark, and such British troops Sept. 5. as Blake and Doyle had long been expecting, without the slightest ground, to land at Santander. The duty assigned to Blake was to threaten the right flank of the French, and compel them to retire from the district of Burgos, and indeed behind the Pyrenees. The gap between Blake and Castaños was to be filled by the British troops and Galluzzo's Estremadurans, as soon as they should arrive from Portugal. Finally, an army of the extreme Right, made up of Valencians, Granadans, the garrisons of the Balearic Islands, and the Spanish troops released by the British in Portugal, was to operate in Catalonia under the command of General Vives. The plan was apparently prompted by the success of the enveloping tactics employed at Baylen; and, as Napier long ago pointed out, it violated every sound military principle.¹

The change of attitude towards British help was, however, genuine, and was encouraged by the readiness with which Doyle, on the very day of the Council of War, drew bills against large sums of English money, which had recently been sent to Cadiz, in order to supply the immediate wants of the Spanish troops. By his assistance the various armies were set in motion; and Stuart reported a week later that they were combining with a degree of cordiality which raised high hopes. A few days afterwards, on the 20th of September, Stuart added that it would be an excellent thing if the British troops in Portugal were sent to Spain. The Spaniards, as he explained, by this time really desired the presence of a British army; and it would be of great advantage for their Generals to refer all their disputes to the headquarters of their Allies. This letter did not reach London until the middle of October; but the details of the Spanish plan appear to have been sufficient for Ministers, for on the 25th of September Sept. 25. they committed themselves definitely to a decision.

¹ Arteche, iii. 136-139.

1808. Twenty thousand infantry, besides artillery and two regiments of cavalry, were to be withdrawn from Portugal and made up by reinforcements from England to thirty thousand infantry and five thousand cavalry ; the whole being designed to act in co-operation with the Spanish armies in the north of Spain for the expulsion of the French from that kingdom. The command of this army, numbering not less than forty thousand men of all ranks, was given to Sir John Moore. All the petty tricks, intrigues, and insults to which Ministers had stooped three months earlier in order to drive their ablest General from active employment had resulted, after infinite trouble and humiliation, in their appointing him to the most important command held by an English officer for a hundred years. And this was due not to any mediation of Wellesley between the two parties, for there had been no time for any such thing, but solely to Moore's self-effacement and persistently loyal service to his country under most trying conditions. It was creditable alike to Ministers and to General that Castlereagh gave Moore full powers and unreserved confidence, and that Moore accepted his triumph in his usual quiet and dutiful spirit, without a shade of exultation.

Thus, therefore, the projects of the coming campaign were mapped out on paper for the allied British and Spanish armies. The British operations of course depended upon the Spanish, and the Spanish upon the caprice of any one among a great number of commanders, scattered along a front of over two hundred miles. It may seem surprising that the British Government should have committed its forces to an enterprise so vague and so hazardous ; but time was precious ; and it was important that Moore's army should move to the front at once. During the days consumed by his march from Portugal it was probable that affairs would develop themselves and that it would be possible, if necessary, to give him fresh instructions. Moreover, the Supreme Junta would be established ;

and with its rise there was a hope that the local spirit of 1808, the Spanish armies and commanders would disappear, or that at any rate the campaign would be directed by a single Commander-in-chief.

Such, it may be conjectured, were the expectations of Ministers, fortified not unnaturally by a knowledge that they could themselves contribute to the unification of command and to the support of the central government, by abjuring all further traffic with provincial committees, and refusing to hold communications or share resources with any body in Spain except the Supreme Junta. They were egregiously deceived. The Supreme Junta met on the 25th of September at Aranjuez. The Count of Florida Blanca was chosen President, and Don Martin de Garay, General Secretary ; and shortly afterwards the Junta nominated a Cabinet, composed entirely of men external to its own body, of whom it will suffice to say that Don Pedro Cevallos was Foreign Secretary and General Antonio Cornel, Secretary for War. On the 26th Doyle reported, on the authority of several members of the new central government, that a Commander-in-chief would be nominated on the morrow ; but on the 30th the less sanguine Stuart wrote that there was little hope of such an appointment at all. However, in default of a Commander-in-chief, a Military Board was formed for the direction of the war, consisting of three civilians and three military officers under the presidency of Castaños ; and to Castaños Lord William Bentinck, who had lately arrived at Madrid, addressed himself upon the important subject of the part to be played by the British army in the coming campaign. So far the general tone at Madrid had been one of easy confidence ; and Bentinck himself had at first been so far infected by it as to speak, in his earliest letter to England, of the further operations to be undertaken after the expulsion of the French from Spain. The obvious danger of an arrangement, which left each of the leaders of the Spanish armies in independent command and subject to no unity of

1808. direction, could not but strike him forcibly ; and he soon expressed apprehensions that the Spaniards had not sufficiently contemplated the possibility of failure.¹

He therefore submitted to Castaños a string of categorical queries as to the route by which the British army should advance, the means of furnishing it with supplies, the question whether the Spaniards would await its arrival before they began operations, the expediency of regulating its movements to meet the contingency of a Spanish defeat, and so forth. To all of these enquiries Castaños furnished somewhat vague though, upon the whole, satisfactory replies ; stating distinctly, among other matters, that the British force expected from England ought to land at Coruña, and that, in any case, the Spanish armies would be so disposed as to cover its disembarkation. Whether the campaign would open before the arrival of the British army he declared himself unable to say, since it would depend upon the enemy's movements ; but he was unguarded enough to aver that he certainly did not expect the Spanish army to be defeated. The truth was that, not being Commander-in-chief, Castaños could not answer for the movements of any army excepting his own, nor, whatever his good-will, for the performance of any undertakings given by the Military Board over which he presided. But it was not to be expected that a Spanish General would make any admissions so damaging to his countrymen ; and Bentinck transmitted the General's answers to England, never doubting that his deeds would correspond faithfully to his words.²

How small was the control that Castaños could exert over his colleagues in the Council of War is shown by the following fact. About the middle of August the Count of Montijo, who commanded a corps

¹ Doyle to Sec. of State, 26th Sept. ; Stuart to Sec. of State, 30th Sept. ; Bentinck to Sec. of State, 26th Sept. 1808. The passage in which Bentinck speaks of the future operations above referred to, is suppressed in the papers presented to Parliament.

² Enclosures in Bentinck to Sec. of State, 2nd Oct. 1808 ; printed in *Parl. Papers*.

of Valencians in the basin of the river Aragon, wrote to Blake at Reinosa that he wished to concert operations with him. The headquarters of these two generals were a hundred miles apart as the crow flies. The whole of the French army lay between them, and, for that matter, the rest of the Spanish armies also. Nevertheless, ignoring their fellow-commanders, they agreed upon their plan ; and on the 27th of August Montijo moved up the Ebro towards the extreme left flank of the French at Milagro, encountered a small French force, and at once fell back. There his part in the proceedings ended.¹ A fortnight later Blake received his orders under the plan projected by the Council of War on the 5th of September, declared that they were faulty, and proceeded at once to the execution of his agreement with Montijo. His force numbered about thirty-two thousand men, including only four hundred cavalry ; and he now pushed forward a detachment eastward towards Burgos, while his main body, wheeling northward, marched upon Bilbao. He entered Bilbao on the 20th, the French garrison retreating before him ; and King Joseph concentrated his force to westward, fearing a formidable attack upon his right flank. Marshal Ney presently marched upon Bilbao with ten thousand men, whereupon the Spaniards promptly withdrew from the place, and Ney, having left three thousand men in the town, retired to his former position about Vitoria. Blake also took post with his army at Valmaseda and Villarcayo, two villages lying to south-west of Bilbao, three marches apart from one another, with a vast range of mountains between them. His object apparently was to threaten Bilbao and Vitoria simultaneously.

Whether stimulated by the report of these operations or by the honorary rank of major-general,² conferred on

¹ Mr. Oman, i. 381, thinks that there was no idea of a concerted operation in Montijo's movement ; but the narrative of Arteche, iii. 205-206, seems to indicate the contrary.

² Marescal de Campo.

1808. him by the Spaniards, Doyle now became supernaturally active. He reckoned that before the middle of October the Spaniards might have one hundred and fifty thousand men opposite to the French front, with a Reserve of sixty thousand more forming in rear ; and he drew up a plan for a combined attack on the French before they should receive their reinforcements. To his joy it was approved by the Military Board ; and orders were sent to the several armies to take the offensive before the 20th of October. "I am sanguine," he wrote, "that we shall reach the Pyrenees before the French reinforcements. Nothing can prevent it but the want of provisions and the want of pre-arrangement. . . ." "I believe," he added two days later, "that we shall reach the Pyrenees without a general action." And having thus set the armies in motion, as he thought, he rushed off to join Palafox at Zaragoza.¹

The Spanish host at the end of September had indeed brought itself forward more or less in accordance with the scheme of the Military Board. Blake's thirty-two thousand men on the left were, as we have seen, at Valmaseda and Villarcayo. East and south of him along the course of the Ebro was a huge gap of fully sixty miles to the next Spanish force at Logroño, where lay General Pignatelli with about ten thousand Castilians, Cuesta having shortly before been deprived of his command for gross insubordination. To the right of Pignatelli were the two divisions of Andalusians and one of Murcians, that formed the army of Castaños. Its numbers are variously stated at twenty-six thousand to thirty-four thousand men ; and it extended from Lodosa to Tudela. To the right of Castaños lay the force of Palafox, numbering from twenty to twenty-five thousand exceedingly raw levies, partly Aragonese and partly Murcians. Its advanced guard of about nine thousand men under General O'Neill was at Sanguessa, forty miles north from Tudela ; a supporting column of half that strength under General St. March was at Egea,

¹ Doyle to S.S. 9th, 11th Oct. 1808.

thirty miles south of Sanguessa ; and the reserve under ^{1808.} Palafox himself was at Zaragoza, about forty miles south of Egea. Thus on the right as well as on the left of the Spaniards there was a huge gap, dividing the army of the Right from that of the Centre ; but this was in pursuance of Doyle's plan, which was to make a wide turning movement upon the passes of the Pyrenees, with Blake's army on the west side, and that of Palafox on the east, while Castaños should attack in the centre. The total number of Spaniards in the fighting line could not have exceeded eighty thousand, and of these four-fifths were recruits, ill-armed, ill-equipped, ill-trained, ill-disciplined. Yet it was with such a rabble, magnified by his own credulity to twice its real strength, that Doyle hoped, by preposterous manœuvres, to overawe King Joseph into the evacuation of Spain.

The French at this time had in Spain, including all garrisons, about sixty-five thousand men. Of this force the right wing under Marshal Bessières was disposed between Miranda on the Ebro and Murguia, a little to north of Vitoria, facing north-west ; the centre under Ney was at La Guardia over against Logroño, facing south ; and the left wing under Moncey lay with its right at Estella, its left opposite Sanguessa, and its centre somewhat in advance at Tafalla, facing south-west. Joseph Bonaparte was expecting reinforcements immediately, so was in no haste to take the offensive. The Spaniards, for all their professed anxiety to attack, were unable, from the divisions among their commanders and the hopeless inefficiency of their forces in every department, to make any decisive movement. Operations therefore came to a standstill ; and on the 20th of Oct. 20. October Castaños rode to Zaragoza to consult Palafox. After a long interview, marked by little amiability on either side, the two Generals drew out another plan, namely that Pignatelli's division and one of Castaños's Andalusian divisions under General Grimarest should be left to hold Ney and Bessières in front, while the rest of his army, joined to that of Palafox, should assail

1808. Moncey's left flank, and O'Neill and St. March, continuing their turning movement, should pass round in rear of Pamplona, and cut off the retreat of the French across the Pyrenees.

Owing to these changes, no attack, as Doyle regretfully reported, could take place until the 26th at earliest ; but such was not the opinion of Grimarest and Pignatelli, who seized the opportunity to cross the Ebro and push detachments forward into dangerous

Oct. 26. proximity with the French cantonments. On the 26th Ney, having driven in Pignatelli's advanced parties, made a demonstration against Logroño, which sent the Spanish General and the whole of his division flying in panic to Tudela ; and on the same day Moncey drove back Grimarest with the loss of eight hundred prisoners. Castaños then came to the conclusion that the time for great enveloping movements was past, and concentrated

Oct. 29. most of his army at Calahorra and Tudela ; for there was intelligence of the arrival of French reinforcements. But now the Supreme Junta assumed control of the operations, and sent a deputation of three members, Francesco Palafox, brother of Joseph, General Coupigny, who had held an important command at Baylen, and the Count of Montijo, to take Castaños to task. They

Nov. 5. duly presented themselves at Calahorra on the 5th of November ; and after a stormy meeting it was decided that the Spanish armies should again take the offensive. Colonel Thomas Graham, who had been sent up to Madrid by Dalrymple and was by chance present on this occasion, bore witness to the great good-temper of Castaños, and expressed the greatest compassion for him. It was impossible, as Graham rightly said, that things could prosper under such management.¹

Meanwhile it was only too true that, to employ the picturesque phrase of Doyle, the golden moment for the Spaniards had passed by. On the 5th of August, three days after the news of Baylen reached him, Napoleon gave orders at a single stroke for the march of seventy

¹ *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, 277 ; Doyle to S.S. 21st Oct. 1808.

thousand men from Germany and of ten thousand from 1808. Italy to the Pyrenees, adding still further to their numbers in the days that followed. During the three succeeding weeks he was incessantly occupied with the details of their clothing, transport, and supply; and on the 7th of September he decreed the organisation Sept. 7. of this new army of Spain into six army corps and a reserve,¹ with a total strength of just over two

¹ *Army of Spain (Corres. de Napoléon, No. 14,300)—*

1st Corps. Marshal Victor, Duke of Belluno.

1st Infantry Division. Ruffin.

2nd Infantry " Lapisse.

3rd Infantry " Villatte.

Cavalry. ?

2nd Corps. Marshal Bessières, Duke of Istria (after 9th Nov. 1808, Marshal Soult).

1st Division. Mouton.

2nd " Merle.

3rd " Bonnet.

Cavalry. Lasalle.

3rd Corps. Marshal Moncey, Duke of Conegliano.

1st Division. Musnier.

2nd " Morlot.

3rd " Frère.

Cavalry. ?

4th Corps. Marshal Lefebvre, Duke of Danzig.

1st Division. Sebastiani.

2nd " Leval.

3rd " Valence.

4th " ?

Cavalry. ?

5th Corps (became later 7th). General Gouvion St. Cyr.

1st Division. Chabran.

2nd " Souham.

3rd " Lechi.

4th " Lino.

5th " Chabot.

Cavalry. ?

5th Corps. Mortier (details not given).

6th Corps. Marshal Ney, Duke of Elchingen.

1st Division. Marchand.

2nd " Bisson.

3rd " Mermet.

4th " ?

Cavalry. ?

8th Corps. Junot (details not given).

1808. hundred thousand men. It remained for him to assure himself of the tranquillity of central and eastern Europe, while his troops should be engaged in crushing, as he hoped for ever, the Spanish insurrection.

In truth the disasters of the French in the Peninsula had caused no little stir in the various Courts of Europe. Austria had begun to arm even in May, upon the first news of the Spanish revolt, and in June had issued new rules for the military training of the entire population. She also approached Prussia, where indeed England had already anticipated her; but Stein and Scharnhorst were for giving way to Napoleon upon every point, even to the extent of concluding an alliance with him, in order more effectually to turn against him later. For a moment the Emperor tried the effect of blandishment, and spoke, through his Foreign Minister, of a good understanding with the Court of Vienna; but

Aug. 15. a week later he turned violently upon Metternich at St. Cloud, and dared Austria at her peril to attempt the intimidation of France. Even, he said, if he were withdrawing one hundred thousand men from Germany for Spain, he would replace them with twice as many; while Russia also would see that Austria did not break the peace. Metternich, though satisfied that these threats masked a real reluctance to fight Spain and Austria simultaneously, gave assurance that his master's military preparations should cease, and mentally adjourned the drawing of the sword until July 1809. This sufficed for Napoleon, who was confident that the pacification of Spain would be complete by January. He then turned to Prussia and concluded

Sept. 8. a convention for the evacuation of her territories, three fortresses only excepted, which were to be held in pledge for payment of a contribution of five and a half millions sterling. For the rest, Prussia bound herself to limit her army for ten years to forty-two thousand men, and to furnish a contingent of twelve thousand to France in the case of a war with

Austria in 1809. Nevertheless, in spite of much 1808.
boasting that Austria did not want war, and that the
assembly of two hundred thousand men in Spain
would not prevent him from keeping half as many
again in Germany and Italy, Napoleon appealed
on the 4th of September to the Senate for the
conscription, in advance, of one hundred and sixty
thousand men. This was the third of his anticipatory levies, for he had already raised the conscription
of 1807 in December 1806; that of 1808 in
March 1807; and now he was forestalling that of
1809.¹

Then on the 16th of September came the news of Sept. 16.
the Convention of Cintra. The Emperor at once
resolved that Junot's corps should be reorganised and
added to the army of Spain; but this event, taken in
conjunction with the recent assassination of the Sultan,
compelled him to come to a definite understanding with
the Tsar as to the maintenance of peace in Europe
during his own absence in Spain. He therefore
arranged to meet Alexander at Erfurt; and the two
sovereigns on the 28th of September entered the town, Sept. 28.
where Napoleon had prepared everything in accordance
with his own theatrical notions. Unfortunately for
himself the Emperor took with him Talleyrand, who
worked strenuously to thwart his plans; and the Tsar,
even without Talleyrand's prompting, gave quiet
encouragement both to Austria and Prussia to trust
him, in spite of outward appearances, and to bide their
time. Ultimately on the 12th of October a treaty Oct. 12.
between Napoleon and Alexander was signed. Russia
was to keep Finland, Moldavia, and Wallachia, and to
advance her frontier to the Danube. Napoleon
was to support Alexander if Austria should join
Turkey against Russia; and Alexander was to
support Napoleon in case of war between France
and Austria. On the 19th the Emperor returned Oct. 19.

¹ Authorities in Sorel, vii. 288-299; *Corres. de Napoléon*, 14,293,
14,309, 14,311.

1808. to Paris, having gained a free hand to deal with Spain.

In the capital, unpleasant news awaited him. Though he had called up at first but eighty thousand conscripts, there had been great difficulty in raising them, and much desertion. However, his troops were now streaming into Spain, and the subjugation of that country would set everything right. Moreover, on the 2nd of October he had ordered two divisions of dragoons and a seventh army-corps to march thither from Germany, making, when Junot's corps should have been reorganised, eight army-corps altogether. The efforts made to bring this vast body of troops in haste across Europe had been intense. The infantry of one whole army-corps had been carried from Silesia to the Rhine on wheels, hastening on day and night with but two halts of one hour each in the twenty-four. After a week of such travelling, both men and officers were reduced to utter exhaustion by want of sleep and incessant jolting ; numbers of arms and accoutrements had been lost, and many men had been gravely injured by the collapse, collision, or upsetting of overloaded vehicles. Orders were then issued for the huge convoy to halt during the dark hours of the night ; but even so the journey from Glogau to the Rhine was accomplished in seventeen days.¹ This, however, was not the first corps to cross the Pyrenees. That melancholy honour was reserved for the Fourth Corps, both divisions of which were sent at once to the French right at Durango and Murguia, to meet the menace of the Galicians under Blake. These reached their stations on

Oct. the 18th and 22nd of October. A week later the First Corps arrived and was likewise directed towards the right, Victor establishing his own headquarters at Vitoria. By the end of the month the Sixth Corps

Oct. 30. was also entering Spain ; and on the 30th there were in the country nearly one hundred and forty-six thousand effective French troops under arms, with about

¹ *Journal du Général Fantin des Odoards, 175-178.*

eighteen thousand horses. Of these, thirty thousand 1808. men were in Catalonia, leaving one hundred and sixteen thousand on the Ebro.¹

It was Napoleon's wish that no offensive movement should be made until he should be present to direct the army as a whole; for he had noted the vicious dispositions of the Spaniards, notably the wide gap between Blake and Castaños, and wished to take advantage of the fault not merely to defeat but to annihilate his enemy. But not even the orders of a Napoleon can prevail against human lust of distinction; and the first blow at the Spaniards was struck before he had begun his journey southwards from Paris. It will be remembered that Blake after entering and evacuating Bilbao had established the larger part of his force at Valmaseda. Finding himself unpursued, he on the 11th of October again marched to Bilbao Oct. 11. and forced General Merle, with the fifteen hundred men who had been left there by Ney, to fall back eastward to Durango. Here Merle, being reinforced on the 12th by seven thousand men from Vitoria, took Oct. 12. up a strong position and decided to stand his ground. Blake, who had taken the field after the haphazard fashion of his race, with his men half-clothed and half-equipped and practically no provision for supplies, halted at Bilbao until the 24th, when he again moved Oct. 24. forward, intent upon the original plan of marching upon the French communications at Irun. But meanwhile, as we have seen, the corps of Lefebvre and of Victor had joined Joseph; and Blake, receiving reports from the peasants that large reinforcements had reached the French, halted at Zornoza over against Durango. To guard against attack on his flank and rear he had

¹ Balagny, vol. i. Appendix A. The nominal total, according to this return, was 173,676 men; but for some reason the Reserve, including the royal and imperial Guards of Joseph and Napoleon and the garrison of Vitoria, are not included. If added to the rest, they bring the total up to close upon 181,000 men. Nearly 26,000 men were in hospital, 10,000 of them from Moncey's corps alone.

1808. been compelled to send two divisions, jointly nearly thirteen thousand strong, to Orduña and Villaro, along two by-roads leading by the north-west and north from Vitoria to Bilbao, so that he lay in his exposed position at Zornoza with only nineteen thousand men.

In such a situation he invited attack ; and Marshal Lefebvre, in spite of Napoleon's known wishes and Joseph's express orders to the contrary, could not resist the temptation to assail him. He fell upon Blake accordingly with over twenty thousand men on

Oct. 29. the 29th ; but the Spanish General fell back at once and was able to retreat in good order with the loss of about six hundred men, sending word to his detachments at Orduña and Villaro to join him by way of Bilbao. That at Orduña succeeded in doing so ; but that at Villaro, about eight thousand men under General Acevedo, received the message too late. Lefebvre, following up his success, had compelled Blake to evacuate Bilbao and had occupied the city

Nov. 1. on the 1st of November ; and Acevedo, on reaching Miravalles, about ten miles to the south of Bilbao, found that his retreat was cut off. Lefebvre, intent upon overtaking the Spanish main body, pushed on south-westward as far as Valmaseda ; but, finding further pursuit hopeless, he left Villatte's division in isolation at that place, and returned with his main body to Bilbao. Meanwhile Acevedo, making the best of a bad position, remained quiet and hidden ; but now a new danger threatened him. Joseph, though much annoyed by the disobedience of Lefebvre, had resolved to turn his success to account, and sent Victor's corps up the road to Orduña and Murguia to intercept Blake's retreat. Victor arrived too late to accomplish this, but his leading division came upon Acevedo's force at Amurrio, thus hemming it in completely. The Marshal, however, thinking that Blake's main body was in front of him, came to a halt ; and Acevedo lost no time in apprising his chief, at Nava, of his danger.

It so happened that Blake had just received an 1808. useful reinforcement. Upon the first outbreak of the Spanish insurrection the British Government had sent orders to its naval commanders in the Baltic to endeavour to bring off Romana's corps, which formed part of Bernadotte's army in Denmark. By means of a Roman Catholic priest, James Robertson, who disguised himself as a commercial traveller, Ministers were able to communicate their design to Romana. The Spanish General found an ingenious pretext for concentrating a considerable part of his scattered corps, and on the 7th of August surprised and seized the Aug. 7. port of Nyborg on the island of Fünen. Other of his troops contrived to capture boats and join him there, after which he crossed to the island of Langeland, where he waited for ten days until, on the 21st of Aug. 21. August, the British fleet appeared to carry the Spaniards to Gottenburg. At this port they were transferred to a fleet of transports, in which after a long voyage they reached Spain, and by the 11th of October were concentrated, some nine thousand strong, at Santander, having left nearly five thousand of their numbers behind in Denmark. The infantry of this corps now reached Blake's camp, raising his force to twenty-four thousand men; and with these he moved upon Villatte's isolated division at Valmaseda at dawn of the 5th of November. Acevedo, at the first sound Nov. 5. of the firing, moved down to join him; and the march brought him across the line of Villatte's retreat, for the French General was naturally falling back before overwhelming numbers. Victor for some reason never sent a man to help Villatte, who was obliged to fight his way through Acevedo's force. This by sheer gallantry and resolution he successfully accomplished, with no greater loss than that of a single gun and three hundred prisoners.¹

¹ Oman, i. 410. Balagny, basing his estimate on Villatte's report, sets down the losses at 200 killed, wounded, and prisoners; but Villatte acknowledged that he had not full particulars, and only

1808. Meanwhile Lefebvre, suddenly awakening to the dangers to which his carelessness had exposed Villatte, had marched up in hot haste to the rescue. Finding, to his great relief, that his subordinate was safe, he turned furiously upon Blake, whom success had carried as far as Guenes, on the road from Valmaseda to Bilbao. The Spanish General at once retired, not without serious losses to his rear-guard, south-westward

Nov. 9. upon Reinosa, and on the 9th of November entered the town of Espinosa de los Monteros. By this time his army, naked and starving, was fast melting away. The country about Bilbao had been eaten up by the constant movements of the hostile armies ; the Spanish troops had never been properly equipped for a campaign ; thousands of raw levies had deserted ; and one division, having been cut off from the main body, had retired upon Santander. Blake was anxious to continue his retreat, and had actually sent his cavalry and artillery on the road to Reinosa, when his rear-

Nov. 10. guard, being hard pressed, asked for support. He had now little more than twenty thousand troops,¹ but, finding a strong position at hand, he determined to give battle. Lefebvre with thirteen thousand men, though Blake knew it not, was hurrying round by the south to Villarcayo to cut off his retreat ; and his pursuers included not only the division of Villatte but the whole of Victor's corps, its commander having been at last stung into activity by a sharp reprimand from Napoleon. Against thirty thousand men the starving Spanish army could not hope for success ; yet on the 10th they held their own gallantly, Victor having presumed to attack them piecemeal, as each of his divisions came upon the scene, without waiting to

mentioned the loss of a gun in a postscript (*Campagne de l'Empereur Napoléon en Espagne*, i. 186-189). Arteche, iii. 266, gives no figures, but states that Villatte's retreat became a rout, and that he was only saved by the coming of night.

¹ Victor, in reporting the battle, stated Blake's force at 50,000, and declared that two French regiments alone had engaged 20,000 Spaniards for four hours.

collect his whole army. But on the following day the 1808. Marshal handled his troops with greater science; and Nov. 11. the Spaniards were utterly routed and dispersed, with the loss of some three thousand men and of all their guns and baggage. The French casualties amounted to over twelve hundred. Blake safely effected his retreat to Reinosa before Lefebvre could intercept him, though on his arrival he could muster but twelve thousand men. Thus in spite of the flagrant blunders of both of the French commanders, the Spanish Army of the Left was, for the time at any rate, incapable of further action.¹

Nor were its troubles over even now. On the afternoon of the 4th of November Napoleon had left Nov. 4. Bayonne, and on the 6th at Vitoria he took personal Nov. 6. command of the French army. Some seventy thousand men being ready to his hand, he on that day ordered a movement southward upon Burgos. That place was held by the army of Estremadura, which had at last arrived from Portugal and was now commanded by the Count of Belvedere, who had lately superseded Galluzzo. Young, ignorant, and inexperienced, Belvedere moved his ten thousand men, most of them raw levies, Nov. 10. into the open plain north of Burgos near the village of Gamonal, where they were instantly routed by Marshal Soult, and hunted by his cavalry for nine miles over the open country with terrible loss. About a third of Belvedere's force was killed, wounded, and taken, and the remainder dispersed past all rallying. The French proceeded to sack Burgos, and the soldiers passed so completely out of control that even the Emperor, who arrived there on the following morning, was powerless to check the disorder. Waiting until the 12th for more troops to come up, Napoleon on Nov. 12. the morning of that day ordered Soult to move by forced marches upon Reinosa with the infantry of the Second Corps and a brigade of cavalry, in the hope

¹ In the foregoing account of Blake's operations I have depended on the narratives of Oman, Balagny, and Arteche.

1808. of cutting off the retreat of Blake, whom Victor's
Nov. 13. latest messages reported to be at Nava. On the 13th
Soult's cavalry came upon a huge convoy at Canduelas,
a little to the south of Reinosa, and captured the
whole of it. It consisted of Blake's baggage, artillery,
and wounded, which he had hoped to send down to
Leon; and this mishap showed the Spanish General that
the road to the south was now closed to him. At the
same time Blake heard that Victor was approaching from
Espinosa and Lefebvre from Villarcayo, barring the only
two remaining roads by which he could escape. In
desperation he decided to abandon stores, horses, and
vehicles, and, turning due north, led his men by a wild
path straight into the mountains, from which barren
region, after two days of terrible hardship and privation,
he brought them safely to the sea. On the way he was
met by Romana, who had been directed to supersede
him. But the new chief refused for the present to take
the command; and the unhappy Blake, having obtained
a few provisions from English ships, waited to allow
his stragglers to come up before plunging again into
the mountains further to the west. After another
miserable march over rocks and snow he emerged into
the valley of the Esla, and brought the wreck of his
force into cantonments about Leon. The Spanish
Army of the Left had practically ceased to exist.

Nor did matters go better for the patriots on their
right. The Central Junta, as we have seen, had ordered
Castaños to take the offensive; but the news of Blake's
disaster at Zornoza and of the arrival of Napoleon
Nov. 11. caused that General to hesitate. On the 11th of
November Castaños fell ill, and Don Francisco
Palafox took upon himself to order isolated attacks at
several points of the line. This made matters worse,
for some of the Generals obeyed and some did not;
while one and all had plans of their own which they
wished to execute. Wrangling and false movements
Nov. 21. occupied all the time until the 21st of November, when
news came that one French column was moving upon

Calahorra and Tudela down the Ebro from Logroño, 1808. and another marching far to south by Soria and Agreda upon Zaragoza. The first under Marshal Lannes was designed to attack the army of Castaños, the second under Ney to cut off its retreat. With much difficulty, owing to the quarrels of the Generals, about five-and-forty thousand Spanish troops were drawn up in a line over ten miles long from Tudela on the north-east to Tarazona on the south-west ; and there, in consequence of the neglect of every military precaution, they were surprised on the 23rd by thirty-four thousand French Nov. 23. troops of Ney's and Moncey's corps under Lannes. Discord and insubordination reigned among the Spanish commanders to the last moment ; and, all things considered, their army escaped very lightly with a loss of twenty-six guns and from four to six thousand killed, wounded, and prisoners.¹ Lannes, in fact, showed no great skill in this battle, and insufficient time had been allowed to Ney to intercept the Spanish retreat. The defeated army retired in two bodies, the Aragonese turning towards Zaragoza, and the Andalusians under Castaños towards Madrid. Both of them were pursued ; and the latter, which had suffered little in the action, were so hard pressed by Ney that they became mutinous and demoralised. Thus the Spanish armies of the Centre and Reserve, though not utterly dispersed like that of the Left, had been broken and routed ; and it was open to Napoleon to move upon Madrid.

Leaving Burgos on the 22nd, the Emperor had Nov. 22. advanced to Aranda, where on the 26th he received the Nov. 26. news of the battle of Tudela. He was disappointed that the action had not been more decisive, but on the 28th he resumed his advance by the great road upon Nov. 28. the capital. There the Junta had made no attempt at preparations for defence. The artillery and one division of infantry of Sir John Moore's army was, as shall

¹ Balagny, ii. 308, gives the prisoners alone at 3000. The French loss, according to his account, did not exceed 700.

1808. presently be shown, in the vicinity of Madrid at this time ; and Hope actually rode into the city to discuss the situation with the Spanish authorities. These last besought him earnestly to bring his troops to their aid ; but Hope was bound by his chief's orders and rightly declined to disobey them. Thus the entire force at the Junta's disposal did not exceed twenty-one thousand men, including nine regular battalions which had fought well at Baylen, but including also the relics of the army of Estremadura which had been routed at Gamonal. After some wrangling over rival claims to supreme command of these troops, the whole were sent up to hold the two passes of the Guadarrama and the Somosierra, by which alone the French could cross the chain of mountains that covers the approach to Madrid

Nov. 30. from the north and west. On the 30th Napoleon forced the pass of the Somosierra with little difficulty ;¹

Dec. 1. and on the 1st of December his advanced parties were in the suburbs of the city.

Madrid was unfortified and indefensible. The organised forces did not exceed three thousand, and weapons were scarce. On the appearance of the French cavalry, a Junta of Defence was formed under the presidency of the Duke of Infantado ; and the entire population came out with feverish activity to throw up hasty and ill-designed entrenchments. Urgent messages were sent to hasten the march of the army of the Centre, now under command of a very incompetent officer, General La Peña, to bring back the routed troops from the Somosierra, and even, as shall be seen, to call in the aid of Sir John Moore. One and all were too far distant to give any help. On the evening of the 1st of December the Dec. 2. French infantry appeared, and on the 2nd Napoleon summoned the city to surrender. Being answered

¹ For the story of the charge of the Polish Light Horse I must refer the reader to Balagny, ii. 420-460, where a vast number of documents bearing upon the subject are quoted in full. Unfortunately these were not published until a year after Mr. Oman had written his account of the affair (i. 458-460).

twice with defiance, he ordered an immediate assault, 1808. and captured the height of Buen Retiro, which, though dominating Madrid to the east, had been left unfortified. On the 3rd he repeated his summons. The Junta answered by sending out two negotiators, General Thomas Morla, who was already contemplating desertion to the side of King Joseph, and a civilian. Napoleon stormed at them, and vowed that, unless the city were surrendered by six o'clock on the following morning, he would put every man taken in arms to the sword. This settled the matter. Such of the people as had been inclined to resistance left the city at once; the Junta drew up a capitulation, which Napoleon accepted; and on the 4th of December the French army occupied the city without trouble or disturbance.

For the next seventeen days the Emperor remained in the immediate vicinity of Madrid, issuing decrees for the reconstitution of the Government of Spain. His reforms, being based upon the general principles favoured by the French Revolution, and aimed above all against the power of the priests and monastic institutions, gave mortal offence to the Spaniards. Concurrently he sent out columns to endeavour to intercept the army of the Centre which was on the march from Guadalajara to defend Madrid; but La Peña, receiving early information of the surrender of the capital, turned south-eastward and by great good-fortune brought his troops safely, though in a wretched condition, to Cuenca. The divisions which had been routed at the Somosierra also compelled their commanders to lead them towards Madrid, but on receiving news of the surrender were seized with panic, and ran headlong to Talavera, sixty miles away. Here they halted from sheer exhaustion, and, to comfort themselves, murdered their General, San Juan. Little, therefore, was to be feared from either of these bodies; and the Emperor began the concentration in the neighbourhood of Madrid of some sixty thousand men for future offensive operations.¹

¹ Balagny, iii. 257.

1808. The last of the French troops summoned from Germany had by this time reached Vitoria, and even Junot's corps, or the greater part of it, had also entered Spain ; so that Napoleon was now in a position to put forth his full strength. Meanwhile he pushed down the Tagus large bodies of cavalry, which drove the remnants of the army of Estremadura in disorder before them to the bridge of Arzobispo and Naval Moral. He was absolutely ignorant of the movements of Moore's army, and conjectured that a menace upon Portugal would send it flying back,¹ wherever it might be, to defend that country. This opinion was strengthened by the facts that the people in the valley of the Tagus spoke of the expected arrival of a British force, and that General Lasalle, when expelling the Spaniards from Talavera on the 11th of December, had captured eight Hanoverian hussars of the King's German Legion.² On the other hand General Tilly, the commandant at Segovia, on the same day reported British cavalry and a few infantry to be in the neighbourhood of Avila, about fifty miles to north-west of Madrid ;³ while Soult, writing from the Carrion, stated on the 10th that fourteen thousand British were at Astorga.⁴ This last detail was nothing new ; but it was supplemented by information that an English corps was moving in the direction of Salamanca.⁵ The Emperor, after comparison of his intelligence from all quarters, concluded that the British meant to oppose his advance upon Portugal either by approaching Madrid, or by descending to the valley of the Tagus to cover Lisbon. The dispersion of the Spanish armies made the British troops now the principal object of his operations ; and, while pressing for further explanation of their reported presence at Avila,⁶ he prepared a great offensive movement against Portugal to compel them to show themselves. If they came forward to defend the

¹ Berthier to Soult, 10th Dec. 1808 ; Balagny, iii. 250.

² Balagny, iii. 292-293. ³ *Ibid.* 295-296.

⁴ *Ibid.* 542. ⁵ *Ibid.* 337-338. ⁶ *Ibid.* 311.

country, he could beat them ; if not, he would retake 1808. it, and drive the British fleet from its all-important base at Lisbon.

By the 15th of December his dispositions for his future operations were complete, but he waited yet a few days to scatter broadcast his bulletins of victory, decrees, and proclamations with a view to the pacification of the country. On the 18th of December the position of his troops was as follows :—

MADRID. Marshal Ney.

6th Corps. Marchand's infantry division.
 Maurice Mathieu's infantry division.
 Colbert's Light Cavalry, 2 regiments.
1st Corps. Lapisse's infantry division.
4th Corps. Leval's ,, ,,

SOUTH-WEST OF MADRID

Imperial Guard ; about 4600 infantry, 520 artillery, 3300 cavalry.

VALLEY OF THE TAGUS

Toledo. Marshal Victor.
1st Corps. Villatte's infantry division.
 Ruffin's ,, ,,
 Beaumont's Light Cavalry, 2 regiments.
 Van Marisy's brigade of dragoons.

BETWEEN TALAVERA AND MADRID. Marshal Lefebvre.

4th Corps. Valence's infantry division.
 Sebastiani's ,, ,,
 Maupetit's brigade of cavalry, 3 regiments.
 Talavera and Oropesa. Milhaud's division of dragoons.
 About Almaraz. Lasalle's Light Cavalry, 3 regiments.

S. AND S.E. OF MADRID

Aranjuez. 1 regiment of Latour Maubourg's cavalry division.
 Madridejos. 1 brigade of Latour Maubourg's cavalry division.
 Tarancón. 1 brigade of Latour Maubourg's cavalry division.
 Villa Nuova de Cardite. 1 regiment of Latour Maubourg's cavalry division.

1808.

N.E. OF MADRID

Line of communication with Zaragoza.

Guadalajara }
Siguenza } Dessolle's infantry division (6th Corps).

ZARAGOZA

Besieging and covering armies.

Marshal Moncey (after 17th Dec., General Junot).

3rd Corps. Morlot's infantry division.

Grandjean's " "

Musnier's " "

Wathier's cavalry division.

Marshal Mortier. 5th Corps complete.

N.W. OF MADRID. Marshal Soult, 2nd Corps.

Saldaña and Guardo on the Carrion.

Merle's infantry division.

Mermet's " "

About Sahagun. Debelle's cavalry, 2 regiments.

Valladolid }
Medina de Rio Seco } Franceschi's cavalry, 2 regiments.

CATALONIA

General Gouvion St. Cyr, 7th Corps.

REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVING FROM FRANCE

Marshal Junot. 8th Corps'; echeloned from San Sebastian to Burgos.

The force immediately under the Emperor's hand for the advance on Portugal numbered about forty-two thousand men; nor was there any Spanish army that stood in its way except the wreck of the Estremadurans, now again under Galluzzo's command, on the south bank of the Tagus opposite Almaraz. Due south of Madrid the French advanced horsemen overawed La Mancha. The remnant of the Andalusians at Cuenca was easily kept in check by Latour Maubourg's cavalry. The Aragonese who had thrown themselves into Zaragoza were on the point of being invested. Soult, in the north-east, had nothing before him but the fragments of Blake's army, now being reorganised by Romana about Leon; and the Emperor's orders to him were to press

on to Leon and drive the enemy back into Galicia. 1808. The British, so Napoleon was now convinced, were in full retreat ; or if they were not, the advance of his own army of the Tagus would soon send them back to Lisbon.¹ If reinforcements were required in any quarter, there was the reserve assembled at Madrid, which could be at once replaced by Junot's corps, whose leading division was already at Burgos. Moreover, twenty thousand conscripts were assembled at Bayonne, under orders to be formed successively into provisional regiments, each seventeen hundred strong, and to be sent likewise into Spain.

This vast host had, it is true, its weak points. Pillage and marauding among the troops had reached such a height that the population fled everywhere at their approach ; and provisions were thus made exceedingly difficult to procure. Even at Madrid there was danger of famine, since the inhabitants had ceased to bring in victuals. An extremely stern order was issued by the Emperor on the 12th of December, Dec. 12. forbidding these evil practices under pain of death.² Another difficulty was clothing, that of the troops having suffered much by their immensely long march from Germany ; and Napoleon was obliged to establish a clothing factory in Madrid itself. Yet another and more dangerous symptom was, that the Spanish peasants were already beginning to attack and destroy small isolated detachments, and in particular despatch-bearers ; insomuch that the Emperor was obliged to order his own couriers to be escorted always by at least five-and-twenty horsemen.³ Nevertheless, on the whole, the Spanish campaign seemed to be going as well as he could have hoped. The native armies had been everywhere dispersed ; and all was ready for the final operations. The capture of Zaragoza, which, so far as ordinary human foresight could judge, was unlikely to take long, would presently release most of the Third

¹ Berthier to Soult, 10th December, 1808 ; Balagny, iii. 250.

² Balagny, iii. 304.

³ *Ibid.* iii. 372.

1808. and Fifth Corps. The capture of Lisbon would put an end to British intervention for ever ; and in a few weeks there would be no lack of troops to accomplish the reduction of the south.

Thus the future presented itself to the Emperor Dec. 19. until the 19th of December. On the morning of that day there arrived a report from General Houssaye at the Escurial, enclosing a statement of three deserters from Moore's army, to the effect that sixteen thousand British had been at Salamanca on the 14th and had made no preparations for retreat. Napoleon was much astonished, for his cavalry had given him no warning of any such thing ; but he decided to await the arrival of the deserters themselves, and about noon proceeded to a review of the troops in Madrid. In the course of the review there rode in a second courier. The Emperor galloped up to meet him, tore the despatch out of his hand and read. The message, bearing date of the 16th, came from Soult, and reported that a reconnoitring party directed by General Franceschi from Valladolid towards Salamanca had been attacked by three squadrons of British cavalry at Rueda on the night of the 12th to 13th ; and that these squadrons had at least five thousand British infantry behind them. Napoleon grasped the truth instantly. The British were not in full retreat. They were not falling back south-westward to the defence of Lisbon. On the contrary, they were striking north-east straight for his communications, and apparently in such force that Soult had called the leading troops of Junot's corps to his help. The whole of his plans were overthrown by this unexpected intelligence, and must be instantly reconstructed. He brought the review to an end on the spot and galloped back to his quarters.

Let us now turn to the movements of the army whose sudden appearance had overset the reckoning and dislocated the combinations of so great a master of the art of war.

CHAPTER XXII

THE despatch conveying the news of Moore's appointment, to command the force which was to be detached to Northern Spain, reached Lisbon on the 7th of October, five days after the departure of Dalrymple. By a singular coincidence Burrard, who had succeeded to the command, had on that very morning written to report that he had received from Bentinck the replies of Castaños to Dalrymple's questions, concerning the co-operation of a British army. To this Sir Harry added a statement of his arrangements for moving twenty thousand men upon Burgos. One large column of infantry under Moore was to march by Coimbra, Almeida, and Ciudad Rodrigo; Fraser's division was to move, if possible, by the "middle road," through Abrantes and Castello Branco; and the cavalry and artillery were to join Hope's division at Elvas and advance by that road, which was the best in the country. On the same afternoon Burrard received orders that he was to transfer the command of these troops to Moore, and that he himself was to remain in charge of the troops left behind in Portugal, to which country his jurisdiction would for the future be confined. The decision whether the expeditionary force should move by land or by sea was left to Moore; and Burrard was directed to make the necessary arrangements for carrying Moore's wishes into effect.

Considering that, only three months before, Ministers had with some ostentation superseded Moore by

1808. Burrard, it was, to say the least, a curious proceeding Oct. practically to supersede Burrard by Moore. So strongly did Castlereagh feel this, that he consulted Burrard's friends at the Horse-Guards before venturing to make the appointment ; and indeed it should seem that Sir Harry himself took the initiative in suggesting that he should be content with an inferior place. If ever two men had an excuse for hating and working strenuously against each other, it was this pair of Generals ; for, apart from the rivalry forced upon them by Government, they were Englishman and Scot, Guardsman and Linesman. But Moore was too great a man and Burrard too great a gentleman to condescend to a quarrel. Sir Harry welcomed his supersession with joy for Moore's sake. "Happy shall I be," he wrote in his official letter to Castlereagh, "if in anything I can serve an officer whose whole soul is in the service, and for whose character and ability I have the highest respect. I assure you," he added, in reply to an apologetic private letter from Castlereagh, "that the appointment of Moore to command the force for Spain is most acceptable to my feelings, for, if I am not blinded or rendered partial by friendship, I can safely say that I do not know so capable an officer to command an army."¹ One hundred years have passed away since Burrard wrote these words ; but if it were necessary now to seek his peer in the army for modest and unselfish good service, such an one could still be found among the veterans of the Brigade of Guards.

By the same mail that brought Moore his letter of service, Castlereagh had written him a private note, assuring him of his personal support in everything concerning the public service, and begging him to write privately without reserve upon all subjects connected with his command. Moore's first and most pleasant duty, most readily fulfilled, was to answer the Secretary of State in as generous and cordial a strain,

¹ Burrard to S.S. 7th, 8th Oct. 1808 ; *Castlereagh's Letters*, vi. 452.

after which he resumed the task, already begun under 1808. Burrard, of preparing for the movement of his army. Oct. Burrard made over to him absolutely the troops which were to be placed under his command, so that in that respect he had a free hand. "Sir Harry Burrard," wrote Moore, "seems on this occasion to put himself aside and to give everything to me and to the service he thinks most important, with as much liberality as if he himself were personally concerned in the conduct of it."¹ The General decided without hesitation that he would march into Spain by land, in preference to moving the troops by sea. An embarkation, as he said, unhinges an army ; and transport, as Castlereagh had warned him, would not easily be found in Galicia. But there remained the difficulties of obtaining transport in Portugal, of deciding upon the route to be followed, and of providing supplies for the troops on their march, all of which matters had been neglected by Dalrymple. Moreover, time was of the first importance, for it was imperative that the troops should pass out of the mountainous region of Portugal before the rainy season.

Moore bent himself to remedy these deficiencies with the greatest energy, but his embarrassments were endless. In the first place, the Treasury had deducted income-tax from what was known as the "bât, baggage, and forage allowance" of the officers, being ignorant, though most unpardonably so, that the said allowance was not intended for the personal emolument of the officers, but to enable them to provide their regiments with the means of conveyance.² Waggons and mules again were almost un procurable.³ Wellesley during his short march down country had merely hired the ox-waggons of the country-folk from the villages through which he had passed, dismissing them as soon as they were relieved by those of another hamlet. The Commis-

¹ Moore to Castlereagh, 9th Oct. 1808.

² Burrard and Moore to the Treasury, 11th Oct. 1808.

³ Burrard to Sec. of State, 15th, 27th Oct. 1808.

1808. series, once more, though zealous, were utterly without Oct. experience ; for excepting in the Low Countries, where centuries of war had made contractors expert, and in Egypt, where the army followed the course of the Nile, the British had never moved out of reach of their ships since the beginning of the war. The chief Commissary was an honourable man, with sufficient cleverness to fit him for the work of an office in London; but in the field he was helpless, and his assistants were in every respect inferior men. Moore, in fact, warned Castle-reagh that for the higher offices of the Commissariat he must seek out able men of business from London at large, for he never would find them in the Treasury.

As to the roads, no one seemed able to say very much. British officers had been sent by Dalrymple through Beira, and General Anstruther had actually led British troops to Almeida to take over the fortress from its French garrison; but the Portuguese themselves could give little information upon the important point whether any one of these roads was practicable for the passage of artillery. General Loison had in the previous June taken six light guns from Lisbon to Almeida, and from Almeida back to Abrantes; but the fact may not have come to Moore's knowledge, and, even if it had, it was of little value. For there is a prodigious difference between mountain roads in the height of summer and in the midst of the autumn rains, and between the transport of one light battery and that of thirty cannon of all calibres. Moore had determined to use all three of the roads quoted by Burrard for the march of his army; namely, that by Coimbra and Celorico ; that by Abrantes, Castello Branco, and Guarda; and that by Elvas and Alcantara; but all authorities, whether British or Portuguese, agreed that not one of them was fit for the passage of artillery. Very reluctantly, therefore, he decided that his guns must take a fourth road, far away from the rest of the army, namely that which leads by Elvas to the bridge over the Tagus at Almaraz, and thence,

following the river upwards to Talavera, turns north- 1808.
eastwards upon Toledo and Madrid. Oct.

This was a very serious matter, and was recognised as such by no one more fully than by Moore. It had been decided that the troops which were to be sent out under Sir David Baird from England should land at Coruña. This signified that the junction of one-third of Moore's force at least must be effected in the heart of Spain; and it was most undesirable to add to this trouble the further anxiety of a second junction with the whole of his guns, coming up from exactly the opposite direction. Nevertheless, if the information given to him by the Secretary of State were correct, the risk was not great. According to Castlereagh, the assembling and mobilisation of Moore's army was designed to take place on the borders of Galicia and Leon, where its flanks would be secured by the troops of Romana and Blake and by the Asturian levies, in all sixty or seventy thousand men, over and above the Spanish troops opposed to the front and right of the French.¹ The obvious points of junction for Moore's infantry, Moore's artillery, and Baird's whole corps would be either Valladolid, Medina de Rio Seco, or Benavente. The further to eastward the point of junction for the artillery, the less serious was the loss of time incurred by sending it round by Madrid. Indeed, if circumstances should be so far favourable as to permit the junction to be effected at Burgos, the loss would be so small as to be negligible, for the division of Hope, which was to escort the guns, was already as far on its way as Elvas.

On the 22nd Colonel Lopez arrived at Lisbon Oct. 22. from Madrid to act as Agent of the Spanish Board of Commissariat at Moore's headquarters. His language was not such as to relieve the General of all misgivings as to supplies; but time was pressing and Moore was obliged to take the Spanish preparations upon trust,

¹ Castlereagh to Moore, 26th Sept.; to Bentinck, 30th Sept. 1808, enclosed to Moore in a letter of same date.

1808. though not without anxiety. "I am advancing," he Oct. wrote to Graham, "without the knowledge of a single magazine being made, or that we may not starve when we arrive." Even more troubled was he by the fact that the Spaniards were still without a Commander-in-chief ; for his instructions bade him concert operations with the Spanish authorities, and there could be no concert if there were no Commander-in-chief. Moreover, it was obvious that if the French were reinforced they would have (as Moore put it) "*beau jeu* among a parcel of independent Generals." However, for the present his one thought was to march his army clear of Portugal before the rains began ; and here the stars in their courses fought against him. The British Government, itself terribly embarrassed by the dearth of silver coin, had hoped that he would be able to obtain money on the spot by drawing bills on the Treasury, and had forwarded such specie as it could collect to the Central Junta. This hope proved to be fallacious, and Moore found himself in the greatest straits. To make matters worse Baird, who had reported his arrival at Coruña on

Oct. 14. the 14th, wrote that he also had no money and must trench upon Moore's already inadequate store. At the last moment too, the bankruptcy of a Portuguese contractor, upon whom Moore had depended for transport, upset some of his most important arrangements. He had hoped to establish an advanced base at Almeida, but now doubted if it would be practicable, or useful even if practicable. None the less he was able to set most

Oct. 18. of his troops in motion by the 18th of October, though only by cutting down their light baggage to a point that caused discontent, and by taking with him only enough ammunition for immediate use and a very scanty

Oct. 27. supply of medicines. On the 27th of October Moore himself quitted Lisbon, leaving the two last regiments¹ to follow him on the two succeeding days. Beresford's and Fane's brigades took the road by Coimbra and Celorico ; those of Bentinck and Hill, with one battery

¹ The Buffs and the 50th.

of light six-pounders, the road by Abrantes and Guarda; ^{1808.} the brigades of Alten and Anstruther that by Elvas ^{Oct.} and Alcantara.¹ The Eighteenth Hussars, Third Light Dragoons of the King's German Legion, both of which had arrived in Portugal after Vimeiro, the Second, Thirty-sixth, Seventy-first, and Ninety-second marched with Hope as escort to his twenty-four guns. Moore's principal staff-officers were Colonel George Murray, Quartermaster-general; Brigadier Clinton, Adjutant-general; Major Colborne, afterwards Lord Seaton, Military Secretary; while among his aide-de-camps were George Napier of the Fifty-second, brother of Charles and William, and Ensign Burrard of the First Guards.²

Meanwhile Baird had arrived at Coruña, as we have seen, upon the 14th of October. His letter of service was dated the 28th of September; and his instructions ran to the following effect. He was to proceed at once to Coruña and canton his force in Galicia until it could be mobilised. To facilitate mobilisation, his cavalry and artillery would bring their own horses with them; three troops of the Waggon-train, also with their full complement of horses, would accompany him; and an officer of that corps, together with a Commissary, would proceed at once to Asturias to purchase draught animals. His force was to consist of close upon fourteen thousand infantry, eight hundred artillery, and rather under three hundred men of the Waggon-train; in addition to which four regiments of cavalry and two troops of horse-artillery, making together not far from four thousand men, were also under orders to embark for Coruña.³ Of the infantry composing this corps,

¹ Beresford's Brigade: 1/9th, 2/43rd, 2/52nd.

Fane's Brigade: 1/38th, 1/79th, 4 cos. 2/95th.

Bentinck's Brigade: 1/4th, 1/28th, 1/42nd.

Hill's Brigade: 1/5th, 1/32nd.

² Moore to Sec. of State, 27th Oct. 1808.

³ Baird's force:—

Infantry: 1 and 3/1st Guards, 3/1st, 2/14th, 2/23rd, 1/26th, 1/43rd, 5/1st, 2/59th, 2/60th, 76th, 2/81st, 5 cos. 1/95th, 6 cos. 2/95th = 12,298 rank and file.

1808. seven battalions, being in Ireland, were to take ship at Cork, and the remainder at Ramsgate, Harwich, and Portsmouth ; after which the whole was to assemble at Falmouth. Since the orders for embarkation had been issued as early as the 3rd of September, it was expected that the entire armament would be collected at the rendezvous by the end of the month.

There was some doubt, however, whether the artillery-horses would be ready in time ; and, if they were not, Baird was directed to sail without them and to leave them to follow by another convoy. This the General declined to do, but detained the whole of the Irish division at Cork until transports arrived from England to carry his gun-teams. His disobedience brought upon him a very severe rebuke for presuming to understand better than the Cabinet the requirements of the public service ; but the fact is worth recording, as a proof of the intense distrust felt by General officers towards the Office of Ordnance when transmarine expeditions were in question. On arriving at Falmouth, Baird again pleaded for delay, in order to make good deficiencies in a few of the transports, but was peremptorily directed to sail at once. Ultimately the

Oct. 9. convoy left Falmouth on the 9th of October, arriving Oct. 13. on the 13th, after a very good passage, at Coruña.¹

Artillery : Foot, 719 ; Horse, 308 = 1027 rank and file ; 974 horses.

Cavalry : 7th, 10th, 15th L.D. (the fourth regiment did not sail) = 3100 rank and file ; 3100 horses.

Waggon-train : 252 rank and file ; 164 horses.

Baird brought with him also the 2/31st and 3/27th, which were sent down to Lisbon in exchange for the Buffs and the 50th. (Baird to Sec. of State, 22nd Oct. 1808.)

General Maurice (*Diary of Sir John Moore*, ii. 342) says that "Baird's part of the army consisted entirely of second and third battalions—raw troops." The statement is not borne out by the above list, for the battalions of the Guards, Sixtieth and Ninety-fifth, were all of equal merit ; and the number of second battalions, which might be of inferior quality, was therefore but five out of fourteen.

¹ Sec. of State to Baird, 3rd, 28th, 30th Sept. ; 1st, 3rd Oct. ; Baird to Sec. of State, 8th, 15th, 30th Sept. 1808.

There, to his astonishment, Baird found that, in spite 1808. of the eagerness of Ministers to hurry him to his Oct. destination, his advent was anything but welcome. The Junta of Galicia, in fact, persistently refused him permission to land ; alleging in excuse that it could not presume to take such a step without the sanction of the Supreme Junta at Madrid, and suggesting that the British would do better to land further to eastward. The true motive was, no doubt, to transfer to some other province the burden of supplying Baird's troops with carriage and provisions ; for the resources of Galicia had already been severely taxed by responding, though very imperfectly, to the requisitions of Blake. Baird protested, but in vain. The Junta consented to the disembarkation of the artillery-horses, in order that their transports might be sent back to England, but would concede no more ; and Baird was obliged to send a courier to the Supreme Junta, and to possess his soul in patience until the man should return. Meanwhile there was no news from the Commissary who had been sent to purchase draught animals in Asturias ; reports as to the supply of horses and mules in Galicia itself were most discouraging ; money was almost unprocurable even at an exchange of seventeen per cent against England ;¹ and it was necessary to apply to Moore, who, as we have seen, was also unprovided with funds, for a supply of cash. Altogether the outlook was thoroughly unpromising.

On the 19th a new character came upon the scene Oct. 19. in the person of Mr. Frere, the newly-appointed Ambassador to the Central Junta. The name of John Hookham Frere will hardly die until the very memory of English humour and English classical scholarship shall have perished ; but it was accident rather than inclination that brought him into public life. Born in 1769, in the same year as Arthur Wellesley, he had at Eton begun a devoted friendship with George Canning,

¹ The Commissaries obtained only £4800, paying at the rate of 5s. 2d. for the dollar. Baird to Sec. of State, 14th, 15th Oct. 1808.

1808. which was ended only with that statesman's life. Through Canning, he had for a time sat obscurely in Parliament; with Canning he had written some of the most brilliant pieces in the *Anti-Jacobin*; and in 1799 he had succeeded Canning as Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office. Thence he was sent Envoy Extraordinary to Lisbon in 1800, being transferred to Madrid in 1802, and recalled shortly afterwards in consequence of a quarrel with Godoy. He was not, therefore, without some qualification for his new office. He had seen something of the Spanish character, he was an enthusiastic student and admirer of the Spanish language and literature, and he was in full sympathy with the emotions that governed the Spanish nation. But, on the other hand, he was indolent, unambitious, absent, unpractical, ignorant of men and affairs, yet sensitive to the last degree and inclined to be pompous in anything that concerned his dignity.

The task imposed upon him by his instructions was not an easy one. He was to work first for a treaty of peace, keeping in the background any idea of commercial advantage to England, and yet, if occasion should offer, seeking for a more liberal system in respect of the Spanish colonies. Intercourse between England and South America was, in fact, imperative if British subsidies of specie were to be continued. At the same time the Spanish colonies must be looked upon as the last refuge of the Spanish monarchy in case of disaster, and, so long as Spain remained staunch against Napoleon, England pledged herself to their integrity; but, if France and Spain should come to a compromise, England would not help Spain to keep them, nor shrink from the recognition of their independence. For the rest, three million dollars were committed to his charge for the Central Junta, one million of which were to follow him almost immediately. He was to seek the good offices of the Junta to further the equipment of the British army; he was to see that that army was used in one body and not weakened by detachments to various Spanish forces; he was to

receive the reports of the Commander-in-chief as to its 1808. movements ; he was in his turn to keep the Commander-in-chief fully apprised of the political situation ; he was to have a watchful eye on the security of Gibraltar ; and finally he was to write to the Foreign Office at least once a week.¹

Frere arrived in company with Romana, and was received with an enthusiasm which made the exclusion of the British troops the more astonishing to Baird. The Ambassador proposed to ask leave for the disembarkation of the army as a temporary measure, but was startled to hear that arrears of pay were due to the men, which must be made good upon landing, and that Baird had not with him a penny with which to discharge them. Very reluctantly he advanced Baird fifty thousand pounds from the million dollars that he held for delivery to the Central Junta ; and it is difficult to understand why he did not give the General more. He knew that bills of exchange were useless ; he knew that a golden guinea would only buy four dollars in silver, and he must have guessed that Ministers, when they embarked three millions of dollars in specie and bar silver for the use of the Spaniards, had no intention of leaving their own commanders penniless, and their own forces unpaid and unequipped. Yet Frere would spare no more than this meagre sum, and, before he would give even so much, he allowed Baird to beg for an advance of £25,000 from the Galician Junta, which was very handsomely granted. Meanwhile he lingered with Romana at Coruña until the last week in October, being unable, notwithstanding the help of the Galician Junta, to find mules enough even for two carriages to carry himself and his staff to Madrid.²

On the 22nd Baird's messenger returned from the Oct. 22. capital, having taken three days longer over the journey than was needful, with the answer of the Supreme

¹ Canning to Frere, 4th, 5th, 6th Oct. 1808.

² Frere to Sec. of State, 21st, 22nd Oct. 1808.

1808. Junta. This august body desired Baird to disembark Oct. at Santander, and would only grant permission for him to do so at Coruña on condition that the troops should be landed in small divisions of two to three thousand men apiece, and should advance in the same manner towards Castile. The pretext alleged for these terms, namely, the exhaustion of the country, was by no means unreal ; but the arrangement was a blow to Baird, who had wished to keep his men in cantonments near Coruña until their equipment was completed. However, there was no help for it ; and he was obliged to accept the fact as typical of his Spanish hosts. Events had already driven the General to the conclusion that, though the Spanish nation was grateful for British money, a British army was neither looked for nor wished for in Galicia. He was at Coruña for ten days before he could get an ounce of bread for his men, the Junta always promising its assistance, but performing nothing ; forage was absolutely un procurable, and the horses had suffered much in consequence ; all efforts to obtain draught cattle had resulted in the acquisition of four or five mules only ; and, most significant of all, fifteen hundred Spanish soldiers, who had been on the march from Portugal to Burgos, were suddenly diverted to Ferrol, evidently from jealousy and mistrust of the British.

Oct. 26. However, after four days consumed in preliminary arrangements, the troops began to disembark on the 26th, and, as they landed, were pushed eastward on the road to Leon. Three regiments advanced to Lugo on Nov. 4. the 28th ; and before the 4th of November the whole were ashore. With the help of ready money things generally had improved somewhat. It was possible to make a contract for the regular supply of provisions to the troops, as the several detachments were sent forward ; and the Commissary in Asturias reported that mules could be hired for transport. Moreover, letters from Spain made it known that the French were receiving large reinforcements ; so that, in spite of Galicia's

apathy, there might after all be employment for a 1808. British army.¹

In the circumstances, Baird grew doubly anxious for the arrival of his cavalry, and of the money for which he had applied to Castlereagh on the day after his arrival. On the 8th of November the Waggon-train, Nov. 8. two troops of Horse-artillery, and the Seventh and Tenth Light Dragoons arrived, with Lord Paget in command. With them came also a letter of the 17th of October to announce that this detachment had been detained by foul winds, that the Fifteenth Light Dragoons would be embarked very shortly, and that oats and hay sufficient for three months' supply would presently follow. A second letter added that half a million dollars would also be despatched ; and by good fortune the men-of-war which carried this welcome supply appeared on the very next day. In the course of the succeeding days Nov. 9. the greater part of the Fifteenth Light Dragoons also arrived; by the 13th of November the whole of the Nov. 13. cavalry had been disembarked, and on that same day Baird left Coruña to join his infantry at Astorga. Before he started he received the news of Blake's reverse at Zornoza ; on the 18th at Lugo he met a report of a second defeat of Blake ; and on the 22nd at Astorga he was overtaken by an avalanche of bad tidings. Blake's army had been utterly routed at Espinosa ; the Estremaduran army had also been routed before Burgos ; the province of Asturias was at the enemy's mercy ; the French had entered Valladolid, and their cavalry was at Benavente, less than fifty miles to the south-east, upon the road to Salamanca ; the joint armies of Palafox and Castaños, thirty thousand men, were now the only force opposed to the French ; and the inhabitants, unarmed and unorganised, seemed to have abandoned all hope of resistance. No item of this intelligence was sent to him by the Central Junta nor by the Spanish Generals, from whom he had heard not

¹ Baird to Sec. of State, 22nd, 25th, 27th, 29th Oct., 4th Nov. 1808.

1808. a word during the whole of his march ; and his most trustworthy information was drawn from Colonel Graham and other British officers. Baird realised, therefore, that his junction with Moore, which had been concerted to take place at Salamanca, was impossible until the whole of his force should have come up; that meanwhile his left flank was uncovered and liable to be turned; and that, in the circumstances, there was every prospect that sooner or later he must retreat. Whether the British would ultimately be compelled to evacuate Galicia he could not divine ; " but," he wrote to Castlereagh, " it certainly never could be intended, nor is it at all possible for the British troops in Spain to contend singly with the overwhelming force of France, unaided and unsupported by any vigorous effort on the part of the Spanish nation." Two days later his mind was made up for him. A letter arrived from Moore at Salamanca announcing his intention to fall back on Ciudad Rodrigo, and directing Baird to look independently to the safety of his own corps. Without delay Baird decided to retreat on Vigo.¹

Let us now return to Moore, whom we saw last Oct. 27. upon his departure from Lisbon on the 27th of October. He himself followed the route of Hill's column through the desolate country by Abrantes to Castello Branco. To his dismay he found that the road for some distance was by no means impracticable for artillery, as had been represented ; and, on receiving reports that reinforcements were beginning to reach the French and that an action seemed imminent, he wrote to Hope bidding him try to find a practicable road northward without going round by Madrid, if he could possibly Nov. 6. do so. On the 6th of November the rain, as Moore had feared, began to fall heavily ; and it was not until Nov. 7. the 7th that he reached Guarda, dreariest and most melancholy of little towns, perched on a rocky hill three thousand four hundred feet above the level of

¹ Baird to Sec. of State, 8th, 9th, 13th, 18th, 22nd, 24th Nov. 1808.

the sea. The next day he entered Almeida, where 1808. an unpleasant duty awaited him. The Sixth Foot, which had occupied the town since the evacuation of the French, was suffering from the misrule of a bad commanding officer, and was in a disgraceful state. The officers had been negligent ; the conduct of the men had been infamous, and one private was actually under sentence of death by court-martial. Moore confirmed the sentence, and then called the real culprits —the officers—before him. It had always been his principle that to make good soldiers there must first be made good officers ; and by strict adherence to this he had made his own regiment, the Fifty-second, the best in the service. He now addressed the officers of the Sixth with great severity, told them that they were unworthy to go upon active service, and passed upon them the hardest sentence which he could inflict—that he should leave them behind. Fate, as it happened, rescinded this sentence later on, with results that seem to have justified Moore's judgment. The fact must therefore be recorded, not from any malignancy towards a regiment which has long since recovered and enhanced its fair fame, but in justice to a great commander.

At Almeida, Moore received letters from Bentinck and Stuart, which gave him a depressing account of affairs at the front. The Supreme Junta was inefficient ; the Spanish armies were weak, untrained, and ill-equipped ; the French, on the other hand, were daily receiving reinforcements. Orders had been given by the Junta for the formation of magazines for the British troops, and Castaños had been designated as the person with whom Sir John should correspond for the concert of operations ; but still there was no Commander-in-chief, and all arrangements seemed to be of the vaguest. Lastly, Bentinck expected a serious action between the French and Spaniards almost immediately, and did not conceal his apprehensions of an unfavourable result.¹ The whole

¹ Bentinck to Moore, 27th Oct. 1808, in Bentinck to Secretary of State on same date.

1808. of this, joined to Baird's report of his difficulties with the Galician Junta, was discouraging ; but, above all, Moore was dismayed by the disposition of the Spanish forces. Half of them, as we have seen, were in Aragon and half in Biscay, with a gap in the centre which left all Spain open to incursion, and consequently exposed the British troops to attack before they could be concentrated. Moore himself was supposed to be marching to join the Spaniards ; and yet the Spanish armies were all moving northward or eastward, away from the point of junction.

Nov. 11. However, he proceeded on his way, and on the 11th of November reached Ciudad Rodrigo, where he found a letter from the Count of Belvedere at Burgos, dated the 9th—the day before the rout of Gamonal—saying that he was about to be attacked by superior numbers, and begging that the British army would come to his support. As Moore said, “The Spaniards seem to think that everybody should fly except themselves.” Sir John answered that he was too far away to give Belvedere any support, and continued his

Nov. 13. journey to Salamanca, where on the 13th he was met by the news that Burgos had been occupied by the French.

Nov. 14. On the following day came further intelligence of Blake's defeat at Zornoza and of the advance of the French to Valladolid ; and it was now evident that, if the enemy moved still further forward, Moore's junction with Baird would be impossible. Sir John, however, resolved not to stop the troops of his own army that were on march to join him, but to make every preparation to retire upon Ciudad Rodrigo ; and he wrote accordingly to Baird and to Hope. The succeeding days brought details of Blake's defeat at Espinosa, and the reassuring news that the French cavalry had retired

Nov. 23. from Valladolid towards Palencia ; and by the 23rd the whole of Moore's infantry, the Buffs and Fiftieth excepted, was concentrated at Salamanca. Though the march had been arduous owing to the rains, the army was in good order and condition, with the exception of

the single battery of artillery. The reports about the 1808. roads had after all proved to be true, in spite of Moore's first misgivings to the contrary. The six guns had only been brought forward with infinite difficulty, and their carriages were much shaken and damaged. The General had, however, the comfort of knowing that he had been right in sending his artillery round by Madrid.

There now lay before Moore one of the most trying duties of all, that of explaining to Castlereagh that the Government's hopes of a successful campaign in Spain were utterly fallacious. On the 17th he Nov. 17. received letters from the Minister dated the 2nd of November, apparently full of sanguine expectations based upon the reports of the various British officers with the Spanish armies.¹ Moore, as in duty bound, demolished this airy structure. He would never have adventured the army unconcentrated, he wrote, had he had any conception of the weakness of the Spanish armies, the apparent apathy of the people, and the inefficiency of the Government. The spirit of the nation, indeed, he believed to be good at heart ; but they lacked able leaders. He was ignorant of the plans of the Spanish Generals ; he had, after many enquiries, been directed to address himself to Castaños, and had done so, but was informed that Castaños had been deprived of his command. In fact, the British army was left to itself ; it was in communication with no one ; it was without knowledge of the intentions of the Spanish Government, supposing such intentions to exist ; and it was dependent upon any information that it could pick up for intelligence of the enemy's strength and movements. As to the reports of British officers, nothing could differ more from the real condition of Spain and of its forces than those which had come to Moore's hands. No doubt those reports had been

¹ The most important of these letters must have been private, for no copy of them exists in the Record Office, nor do they appear in the *Letters of Castlereagh*.

1808. written in good faith but certainly with unsound judgment; and Doyle in particular was the laughing-stock both of the British and Spanish armies.¹ Upon the whole, therefore, reverses were to be expected. The army would do its best, but without Spanish aid it could not face the superior numbers of the enemy. For the rest, the whole of the money sent to Baird had been expended by that General in establishing magazines on his line of march, and Moore himself therefore was embarrassed not less by want of funds than by the impossibility of judging what it might be feasible for him to do.²

The writing of such letters must have been inexpressibly galling to Moore. Castlereagh in the handsomest manner had buried all unkindness when announcing the General's appointment to the chief command; and Sir John was unfeignedly anxious to do his best for him. Yet it seemed likely that the story of Sweden was to be repeated; that Moore had been sent on a fool's errand, and that, though entrusted with a larger army than any British leader since Marlborough, he would be obliged to return, as Pulteney had done from Ferrol, to be reviled for having done his duty. He saw the danger of the situation plainly enough, and judged that nothing could be worse. A letter came in from Hope, who, as has been told, had gone forward to Madrid to consult the authorities, and had, in company with Bentinck, held a long conference with General Thomas Morla, the person deputed by the Junta to meet them. Hope could only report that the Spaniards had no plan of operations whatever, and that Morla recommended the junction of such portions of the British force as could be brought together, somewhere in the centre of Spain.

¹ This judgment of Doyle was no more than the truth. He went by the name of Don Carlos Doyle, and his letters were preserved by Moore's Generals as masterpieces of absurdity. See Delavoye's *Life of Lynedoch*, pp. 273-277.

² Moore to Castlereagh, 24th Nov. 1808.

Again on the 19th Moore had tried to stimulate the Junta by writing to Frere general complaints of the entire neglect of his army by the Spanish authorities, and representing that unless matters were improved it would be his duty to withdraw it. Frere embodied the most vigorous paragraph of this letter in an exceedingly discourteous note of his own to the Secretary of the Junta. The result was singularly disappointing. The Secretary, Don Martin de Garay, replied with imperturbable good temper. The Junta professed ignorance of Blake's misfortunes and a great desire to see Moore in person at Aranjuez, where operations could be concerted for the junction of the British army with the Spanish left, and for the destruction of the enemy; but in any case it had deputed General Thomas Morla to agree with the British commander upon the plans to be followed. Since Hope had just reported that neither Morla nor his masters had any plans, there was small comfort for Moore in this letter. Frere added to it of his own motion an intimation that the Junta desired Moore rather to join Blake than to cover Madrid, but that it deprecated above all things a retreat upon Portugal, which would cause general depression and encourage the idea that England, having made an ineffectual effort on behalf of Spain, was relapsing into her old system of protecting Portugal only. The Junta itself, he mentioned, was intending to retire to Cordova, though he hoped to make it wait at Toledo.¹

These two documents reached Moore on the 27th, Nov. 27. and were at once answered by him in a most admirable letter to Frere. De Garay's note, he said, would be very satisfactory if it were a matter of dealing with events six months ahead. But the need was immediate and urgent. The French had destroyed one army, Blake's; they were threatening Madrid; they would shortly overwhelm the other Spanish army, that of

¹ Moore to Frere, 19th Nov.; Hope to Moore, 20th Nov.; Frere to Moore, 25th Nov. 1808.

1808. Castaños, and compel it to retire. No other armed force
Nov. 27. existed in the country. He could perceive no enthusiasm
in the nation: in Leon and the neighbouring provinces
a dozen French horsemen could raise what contributions
they pleased. In brief, the situation was no longer that
which had prompted the British Government to send its
army to Spain. That army had been sent to co-operate
with the Spaniards as auxiliaries, not to cope unaided with
the whole force of France. The question, therefore, of
the future disposition of the British troops had become
as much political as military. What would the Cabinet
wish, if it were on the spot to decide? Two courses
were open to the British Commander. He could retire
to Portugal, which would probably divert the French
forces to that quarter, and could re-enter Spain if a
favourable opportunity should offer. Or he could march
on Madrid, throw himself into the heart of the country,
and share the fortunes of the Spanish nation. He would
be unable to do much, because he had not transport to
take many stores with him, and the operation would be
of the greatest hazard. But none the less the gain
might be worth the risk; for the Spaniards were a fine
people and with able leaders would have risen to the
occasion. Moore did not ask Frere to assume any
responsibility, for he was fully prepared to take all upon
himself; but he was anxious for Frere's opinion, since
the Ambassador was probably better acquainted with
the views of the Cabinet than he was himself.¹ Thus,
so long as a Spanish army remained upon foot, Moore
was prepared to do his best to second it; for his instruc-
tions, as he truly said, did not desire him vaguely to give
help to the Spaniards, but expressly ordered him to
co-operate with their armed forces, and, moreover, not
to do so until his own army was united. For that
concentration he had given his orders. Baird was to
bring as much of his force as he could to Benavente
on the 1st of December; Moore himself was to divide
his corps between Toro and Zamora; and Hope was to

¹ Moore to Frere, 27th Nov. 1808.

come up to Tordesillas. This done, the whole would 1808. take up a line on the Douro to cover the arrival of their stores and act according to circumstances. But it was impossible to doubt that the army of Castaños would sooner or later share the fate of Blake's ; and the question really resolved itself into one of time.

No further news came in on the 26th or 27th ; but a person passed through Salamanca who roused the suspicions of Moore. This was no other than Charmilli, the individual who became known to us in St. Domingo as the most rapacious and irrepressible of adventurers. Apparently he had settled in England, for he was now the husband of an English wife and still paraded his title of Colonel ; but British subsidies and a passion for fishing in troubled waters had attracted him to Spain ; and, still true to his old trade, he was on his way to Madrid to offer to raise a regiment of cavalry. His character was known to Moore, and he warned Mr. Charles Stuart of Charmilli's probable arrival at Madrid in language which, though gentle, should have sufficed to put every member of the British Embassy upon his guard.¹

The day of the 28th passed without incident, but in Nov. 28. the night Charles Vaughan, Stuart's secretary, arrived with despatches, bringing the news that Castaños had been utterly defeated at Tudela.² Without a moment's delay Moore dictated orders for a retreat upon Portugal, ordering Baird at the same time to fall back to Coruña and embark for Lisbon, and directing Hope, who by this time had crossed the Guadarrama, to join him by forced marches by way of Peñeranda and Alba de Tormes. On the following day he summoned his Nov. 29.

¹ Moore to Charles Stuart, 27th Nov. 1808.

² He had ridden the 476 miles from Tudela to Madrid and from Madrid to Salamanca in six days, and he went on with despatches to Coruña, accomplishing the 790 miles in eleven days, including two days' stay at Madrid. Oman, i. 508. Probably this ride will bear comparison with any of the famous rides of Napoleon's aide-de-camps ; but all pale before Harry Smith's ride of 600 miles in six days from Capetown to Grahamstown.

1808. Generals and announced his intention to them ; informing them that he did not ask their advice, nor even their opinions, for he was taking all responsibility upon himself, but only required them to carry his orders into effect. His decision could not be gainsaid, but it caused loud murmuring and discontent, even among his personal staff. Colonel Murray favoured a concentration of all the forces behind the Douro ; Edward Paget was for a movement to the right, if it could be undertaken in conjunction with the Spaniards ; every one had some plan or another. Moore allowed them to grumble to their heart's content. He had no intention of retiring until Hope should join him ; and, if reports of his purposed retreat upon Portugal should reach Napoleon, as seems actually to have been the case, he was the more likely to be left unmolested. To Hope he confessed that the determination to retire was a cruel one for him to make, but that he thought it imperative, for his junction with Baird was out of the question, and even with Hope himself very doubtful. To the Embassy at Madrid Sir John wrote more guardedly, lest his letter should be intercepted, but with equal resolution. There was nothing so easy, he said, as for the Junta to form armies with their pens. This was shown by their recent creation of eighty thousand men in Leon ; but the fact was that they had allowed the favourable moment, before the French were reinforced, to pass, and that now it was gone for ever. If the Spaniards should still resist, the British force could still come to their assistance from the south ; but in the north of Spain the prospect was hopeless.¹

There can, I think, be no doubt but that Moore's decision to retreat was absolutely right. It is true that his intelligence, derived from the Spaniards, stated the French force only at one hundred and ten thousand instead of at two hundred and fifty thousand ; but even so, what could he hope to effect with forty thousand

¹ Moore to Baird and Hope, 28th Nov. ; to Mr. Stuart, 29th Nov. 1808.

men, divided into three different bodies, and not yet 1808. furnished with transport for a campaign? The Spanish resistance had collapsed ; and, although Madrid had not yet fallen, yet Moore felt certain—and he was perfectly correct—that it would make no defence. Before he could do anything at all, he must unite his forces ; and, since he could not reckon on Napoleon's ignorance of his whereabouts, it would be obviously unsafe for him to arrange for a junction with Hope and Baird in advance of Salamanca. Such a course would only have invited Napoleon to defeat him in detail. The junction, therefore, must be carried out in rear of Salamanca ; and, this being so, it could hardly take place except in Portugal, and then only with a view to ultimate retreat, for the frontier of Portugal was indefensible. But, even if Moore had had his force concentrated under his hand, it would have served no purpose to march it into the heart of Spain, and to sacrifice it in a chivalrous and hopeless struggle against overwhelming numbers. His army, as Canning phrased it later, was not one of many corps of equal strength ready for active service. It was the only British army, lately called into being by the heroic measures of Castlereagh. If it were destroyed, it could not be replaced ; and, though it might cover itself with glory, its annihilation, far from furthering the cause of Spanish independence, would ruin it completely and imperil the fate of all Europe also. The Spaniards might cry out that they were abandoned ; but the reappearance of the army at Cadiz would soon silence such clamour, and the struggle could then be renewed. Nothing could be more certain than that the destruction of the British force in Spain was Napoleon's principal object; from which it inevitably follows that a British General who courted such destruction, no matter how chivalrous his motives, would have been a bad General. Moore therefore acted rightly, both for his troops and for his country, when on the 28th of November he decided to evacuate Spain ; and by

1808. doing so he earned the hearty approval of the Government.¹

In obedience to Moore's orders, Baird began his retreat forthwith; and Moore himself sent off his sick and his reserve of ammunition under escort of five companies of the Sixtieth, with orders that these companies should go into garrison at Almeida and liberate the Sixth to join the army. The fact was that the fifth battalion of the Sixtieth included in its ranks a great number of French prisoners; and the desertion among them had consequently been so great that the corps was not to be trusted in face of the enemy. Hope had experienced exactly the same trouble with the five companies that formed part of his column, and had sent them back to Lisbon even before he reached Elvas.² It was fortunate that he did so, for, when

Nov. 30. Moore's orders reached him on the 30th at Villa Castin, on the western side of the Guadarrama, the intelligence of the French movements around him was most disquieting. A British staff-officer sent out by Moore reported six hundred French cavalry with two guns to have entered Tordesillas, as many more to be at Valladolid, and a strong French force to be moving upon Segovia; so that Hope seemed likely to be cut off from his junction with Moore on one side, and from his retreat to Madrid on the other. Moreover, the French cavalry had actually exchanged shots with the British at Arevalo on the 29th, though the latter retired without attempting resistance. Moore's orders, however, pointed out to Hope a third route; wherefore, pushing his cavalry north-westward towards Adaneros and Arevalo to cover his movements, Hope took his main column south-westward to Avila, and then turning north-westward back to the direct road at Fontiveros, Dec. 2. reached Peñeranda on the 2nd of December, after a march of forty-seven miles in thirty-six hours. There

¹ Canning to Frere, 9th Dec. 1808; Castlereagh to Moore, 10th Dec. 1808.

² Cradock to Sec. of State, 15th Dec. 1808.

he gave his weary men and animals rest, and on the 4th ^{1808.} entered Alba de Tormes, only fifteen miles from ^{Dec. 4.} Salamanca. Thus the junction with Moore was assured; and Sir John, having at last recovered his guns and part of his cavalry, found himself at the head of rather more than twenty thousand men.¹

But this was only one of many important events which happened in the first days of December. First there came to Moore a letter from Romana at Leon to say that he was reorganising Blake's army, and that though they were "in the most perfect state of nakedness imaginable" they were in good heart, and only needed food to restore them.² On the 2nd arrived despatches ^{Dec. 2.} from Mr. Stuart and Frere, in answer to Moore's announcement of his intended retreat. Both strongly deprecated any such action. Stuart declared that its effect at Madrid would be as bad as a decisive defeat by the French, and put forward arguments as to the strength of the enemy which, viewed by the light of facts since known, seem incredibly foolish. Thus, though the Spaniards reckoned the French at one hundred and ten thousand, instead of two hundred and fifty thousand, Stuart declared that the Spanish estimate was exaggerated; and he based an elaborate reasoning upon the hypothesis that the French had only eleven thousand cavalry, whereas they had over twenty thousand. Frere's reply consisted of a discourteous little note covering a much larger letter, which he had written in response to Moore's of the 27th of November. He began sensibly enough by warning Moore that the provinces which he had seen, consisting of vast plains, and therefore defenceless, had never in the whole course of history been distinguished by military or patriotic spirit. He then gave details concerning the Spanish forces which, having been written before knowledge of the battle of Tudela, were utterly worthless; and he

¹ Londonderry MSS., Charles Stewart to Castlereagh, 29th Nov. 1808.

² Romana to Moore, 30th Nov. 1808.

1808. ended by trenching upon military matters and urging Dec 2. Moore to take up a position at Astorga, and to retreat through Galicia upon Coruña, rather than through Portugal upon Lisbon. On the question respecting which Moore had asked his opinion—namely as to the orders which the Cabinet would be likely to give, if it were on the spot—he vouchsafed no answer whatever. Presumably he misconceived the purport of Moore's queries ; but it seems never to have occurred to him, any more than to some of his fellows, such as Drummond, that his ideas upon military subjects were likely to be valueless.¹

Enclosed in this despatch was a note from the Supreme Junta introducing two military deputies, by name Don Ventura Escalante, Captain-general of the armies of Granada, and Brigadier-general Don Augustin Bueno, to concert operations with Moore. These two gentlemen appear to have arrived with the despatches on the 2nd ; and, very unfortunately for them, there appeared also later in the same evening Colonel Thomas Graham, who had left Madrid on the previous day, and on his way had encountered General San Juan and his fugitive army from the

Dec. 3. Somosierra. On the 3rd Moore received the two Spaniards, who pressed him to hurry to the defence of Madrid, alleging that San Juan was still defending the Somosierra, that the armies of Andalusia and Estremadura still numbered thirty-four thousand men, and that Napoleon could not possibly have more than twenty thousand men assembled for the advance upon Madrid. No doubt the poor old gentlemen spoke in all good faith ; but, after so many vain endeavours to concert operations with the Spanish Generals, Moore was not unnaturally impatient at being expected to discuss military movements with two persons whom he described, crudely but not unjustly, as old women.²

¹ Stuart and Frere to Moore, 30th Nov. 1808.

² Moore to Frere, 6th Dec. 1808. Mr. Oman rightly condemns the use of such a term in an official despatch ; but though I have

He confronted them with Graham to prove to them 1808. that their information was obsolete and their calculations absurd, and, as was to be expected, he reduced them to despair. They adjured him to join his force to Romana's and advance to save Madrid ; but here again Moore checked them with the intelligence, lately received from Baird, that Romana's force did not amount to more than five thousand ill-armed and ill-equipped men. No circumstances could have made the interview a pleasant or profitable one ; and the General, overwhelmed by work and anxiety, appears to have brought it to an abrupt end. It only confirmed him in his opinion that it was impossible to work with a Government which declined to face facts. Nevertheless it seems that on this day, the 3rd of December, he first thought of countermanding the orders for retreat. Graham from his own personal observation had reported that Madrid was arming and determined to resist ; and this news alone was enough to decide Moore to make another effort for Spain.¹

On the 4th, as we have seen, Hope's force gained Dec. 4. touch with Moore's, and the General was apprised of important information gathered by Hope's cavalry, all of which tended to show that Napoleon was concentrating upon Madrid, and for the present was contemplating no movement westward. Also there arrived despatches from Castlereagh containing additional instructions to guide Moore in his relations with the Spaniards. Thereby he was placed under the orders of the Spanish Commander-in-chief, if one should be appointed, but, if not, he was to concert his operations with all of the commanders. A most secret despatch added that, if, in his judgment, the safety of

not been able to find the original document, I greatly doubt if this was an official despatch. I have not seen a letter of Moore's written in this campaign which was not entirely in his own handwriting and marked Private. He had not time to write official letters.

¹ Delavoye, *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, pp. 285-286 ; James Moore's *Narrative of the Campaign*, pp. 85, 109.

1808. his corps was likely to be imperilled by obedience to a Spanish order, he might at his discretion suspend the execution of it, and report the same to the Secretary of State. Other despatches informed him that further reinforcements of cavalry and horse-artillery were awaiting embarkation, and that Sir John Cradock had been appointed Commander-in-chief in Portugal, with directions to send two more battalions from Lisbon to the front. This last was gratifying news ; for Cradock had served in Egypt with Moore, and could be counted upon to second him unselfishly and energetically by every means in his power.¹

Dec. 5. On the morning of the 5th Charles Stewart, brother of Castlereagh and commanding officer of Hope's brigade of cavalry, rode into Salamanca and was received by Moore at headquarters. Since we shall see more of this officer in the years before us, it will be well to say something of him in this place. His leading characteristic was intense love and admiration of his brother, in itself most natural and laudable, and, if allied with good sense and sound judgment, calculated to be of advantage to the public service. But good sense and sound judgment were unfortunately just what were lacking in Charles Stewart. As a brigadier of cavalry he was quick, enterprising, and brave as his sword, in fact a very good officer ; but for all other purposes Moore summed him up, with his usual righteous severity, as "a very silly fellow." His ideas were strictly circumscribed by a narrow outlook and a slender intelligence ; yet he bathed himself so continually in the reflected greatness of his brother that he aspired to be Castlereagh's second self beyond the seas. One of Castlereagh's most important despatches to Dalrymple reached that General, as has been told, unsigned. Charles Stewart without hesitation volunteered to make good this omission with his own signature ; and Dalrymple, while rejecting the remedy as even more objectionable than the defect,

¹ Castlereagh to Moore, 14th, 20th Nov. 1808.

noted down the offer in a few words of ponderous contempt upon the back of the despatch for the benefit of his successor.¹ Plainer evidence that the Brigadier regarded himself as his brother's representative there could not be ; and this illusion, added to a busy, meddlesome, intriguing habit of mind, made him, capable officer though he was in the field, an extremely undesirable addition to a British army. Moore, however, did full justice to his military capacity, and, being anxious to show that his old quarrel with Castlereagh was entirely healed, spoke to Charles Stewart with much openness, showed him the Dec. 5. letters which had passed between Castlereagh and himself, and informed him of his determination to retreat. Stewart restrained his feelings, as he said, with difficulty, but gave it as his opinion that even a temporary movement to the rear would bring about the fall of Portugal and the subjugation of the Continent. He then retired to pour out his afflicted soul in writing to Castlereagh, "knowing what the Government would feel when their army was the first to show that they think that all is lost. . . . Alas," he continued, "one may talk and write ; but it will not avert the fatal decision. The die is cast. A breath against it here might be imputed to the worst of motives, especially *in me*, and I write in trembling lest any mishap should befall my letter. . . . Our news to-day is that the Spaniards at Madrid are resolved to bury themselves in her ruins rather than let the French enter. . . . Morla has assumed the chief command and all seem united in one enthusiastic determination. . . . Better sacrifice half our army, in my mind, than abdicate without imperious necessity a cause yet only in its bud. . . . God bless you, dearest brother. . . . Would to God we had the hero of Vimeiro at our head now."² Such, no doubt, was the talk of many

¹ Sir F. Maurice, with excellent judgment, has printed Dalrymple's comment in *Diary of Sir John Moore*, ii. 337.

² *Londonderry MSS.*, Charles Stewart to Castlereagh, 5th Dec. 1808.

1808. other officers besides Charles Stewart ; and it is hardly Dec. possible to doubt that he was among the most active of the malcontents. Probably too many of his brother officers accepted him at his own valuation, and, having persuaded themselves that Moore was acting against the wishes of the Government, thought it their business to intrigue for Moore's supersession by Wellesley. Such evils, one fruit of Pitt's many futile expeditions, were too common in the British army of that day. We have already seen the conspiracy of officers in Egypt to oust Hutchinson, and Wellesley's own overtures to Moore to displace Dalrymple : in due time we shall see that even Wellington suffered in this way, and on one occasion took Charles Stewart so severely to task for his share in the matter as to reduce him to tears.

A little later in the day there came to Moore another letter from Madrid, signed by the Prince of Castelfranco and Don Thomas Morla on behalf of the Supreme Junta. This represented that the forces from the Somosierra and the army of Castaños, together forty thousand strong, were falling back upon Madrid, and entreated the British commander to come and join them. The date of this letter was the 2nd of December, the very day upon which Morla had begun to draw up the capitulation. The Supreme Junta, as a matter of fact, had rushed away on the previous day upon the news that the French had forced the pass of Somosierra; escaping, indeed, in such panic and confusion that, by Frere's own testimony, his communication of Moore's intention to retreat had passed almost unnoticed.¹ Moore was still pondering over the contents of this letter when a second messenger arrived with a despatch from Frere, also announcing that the spirit of resistance in Madrid was such as to call for Moore's utmost efforts in support. The letter was dated from Talavera, and intimated that the Junta was about to retire, with Frere himself, of course, in attendance, from

¹ Frere to Sec. of State, 4th Dec. 1808.

thence to Badajoz, a fact which did not seem to indicate 1808. that the Junta reposed any great confidence in the efforts Dec. 5. of the capital. The messenger himself, who was no other than Charmilli, clamoured for access to the General, and when at length admitted to his presence, discoursed eloquently of barricaded streets, new batteries, and an enthusiastic people in arms. Moore listened impassively and made no sign. Charmilli asked for a confidential interview, but Moore would not grant it, rightly mistrusting the man and refusing him the slightest clue to his thoughts. Upon the morning of that day he had written to Castlereagh repeating his determination to retreat; but now that Graham, the Junta and Frere all agreed that the people of Madrid were bent upon a determined resistance, he felt that it was his duty to support them. Moore was inwardly still sceptical as to the attitude of the capital city, and he thought that in any case the spirit of resistance had arisen too late; however, when once it was aroused, there was no saying what miracles it might not achieve, and he therefore considered it right to use his army for its encouragement. That same evening he announced his change of resolution to Castlereagh, and ordered Baird to halt and prepare to return to Astorga.

On the following morning he supplemented this by Dec. 6. a definite command to Baird to return "bag and baggage" to Astorga, but to continue to establish magazines in preparation for retreat. Baird was also to send two regiments of cavalry and one of Horse-artillery to Zamora to join Moore, and to move the rest of his troops by brigades to Benavente. "The people of Madrid," Moore wrote, "it is said, are enthusiastic and desperate, and certainly at this minute do resist the French. The good which may result from this it is impossible to say; I can neither trust to it, nor altogether despise it. If the flame catches elsewhere, the best results may be expected. . . . If the bubble bursts, we shall have a run for it. . . . Both you and me, although we may look big and determine to get

1808. everything forward, yet we must never lose sight of Dec. 6. this, that at any moment affairs may take that turn that will render it necessary to retreat." The faulty grammar and construction of the last sentence shows the haste with which it was written.¹

It remained for Moore only to inform Romana of his resolution, which was done early on the 6th; and to despatch Colonel Graham to ascertain if possible what was actually going forward in Madrid. And then took place an incident so extraordinary as to be almost incredible. Charmilli, despite of the rebuff suffered on the previous day, again presented himself and delivered a letter from Frere which ran as follows : " In the event, which I do not wish to presuppose, of your continuing the determination of retiring with the army under your command, I have to request that Colonel Charmilli, who is the bearer of this, and whose intelligence has already been referred to, may be previously examined before a Council of War." Thus Moore learned for the first time that this adventurer, of no character whatever, who was in all probability a spy, had been entrusted by Frere with the secrets contained in the despatches, and was actually the instrument chosen by the ambassador for overruling the decision of the Commander-in-chief by a mutinous combination of his subordinates. Frere was a man of brilliant unwisdom, but it was hardly possible to suppose that this idea of a Council of War could have entered his head unless suggested by one or other of Moore's officers. The wrath of the General at last blazed up in earnest ; and, without a word which could give a hint as to his military plans, he directed the Provost Marshal to remove Charmilli from the camp. Then with marvellous self-command he wrote to Frere recapitulating what had occurred in the past, hinting very mildly that what he had sought from him was not military advice, and stating his plans for the future. The letters delivered by Charmilli and the whole

¹ Moore to Castlereagh, 5th Dec. ; to Baird, 6th Dec. 1808.

subject of his mission he allowed to pass almost 1808. without comment, merely saying that he could not trust such a man, and did not wish him to be employed again in any communication between himself and Frere. The only sarcasm which Moore allowed himself was a remark that, if the enthusiasm in Spain were as great as was alleged, the Junta could possess but a small share of it, or its members would have chosen a less remote place of retirement than Badajoz.¹

A more perfect example of loyal patience, under intense provocation, for the sake of the public service, it would be difficult to adduce. It is as difficult to find words that will adequately characterise Frere's behaviour, which, if he had been concerned with a less strong man than Moore, might have brought about great disasters. It is but mild censure to say that the Ambassador left undone that which he ought to have done, in failing to furnish the General with trustworthy intelligence, and did that which he ought not to have done, in trying to force upon him by the most condemnable of methods his own crude military plans. It is probably most just as well as most charitable to ascribe his conduct to that transcendent folly, of which only really clever men are capable. Yet it is noteworthy that not a word of censure was addressed to him by Canning until four months later, and then only because Moore's family insisted upon the publication of the correspondence which had passed between the General and the Ambassador. It must be added that the vast majority of the letters exchanged between Frere and Moore, and transmitted by the latter, are not to be found at the Record Office. The inference is that they were withdrawn by Canning's orders, in order to shield his friend at the expense of the General. These things help us to account for the undoubted fact that no military enterprise prospered, so long as Canning remained at the Foreign Office.

Meanwhile Moore put Frere and all his works out

¹ Frere to Moore, 3rd Dec.; Moore to Frere, 6th Dec. 1808.

1808. of his mind, and hastened his preparations for an advance. Hope, always a most capable officer, had contrived to equip his force with transport during his march, and Moore had done likewise ; but Baird was still unready and needed some admonition to follow

Dec. 8. the example of his colleagues. On the 8th Moore, supposing that Madrid still held out, announced to Baird and Romana that he would move on the 10th northward to Zamora, and thence eastward upon Toro, with a view to uniting his forces with theirs ; but on

Dec. 9. the 9th Graham returned with the ambiguous news that a capitulation had been signed for the surrender of Madrid, but that the people were still inclined to resist. This information was derived from certain deputies of the Central Junta who were at Talavera, and who had favoured Graham with further intelligence of equal falsity, namely, that the army of Castaños still numbered thirty thousand men, and that of Romana as many more ; also that the entire French force in Spain did not exceed eighty thousand men, and that no further reinforcements were on march to join it. Moore, who had by this time learned to discredit all Spanish reports, deferred his march for one day ; and wrote to Frere that he should unite his force at Valladolid, to undertake such operations as appeared to him to be best. He added, though without a word of reproach, that not a whisper as to the fate of Madrid would have reached him, if he had not himself sent Graham to ascertain the truth.¹

Dec. 11. On the 11th Edward Paget's division and Beresford's brigade marched to Toro, where they found Lord Paget

Dec. 12. with Baird's cavalry awaiting them ; and on the 12th Hope's detachment with the infantry brigades of Bentinck,² Fane, Hill, and Charles Alten moved upon Alaejos and Tordesillas, covered by Charles Stewart's

¹ Moore to Baird and Romana, 8th Dec. ; to Frere, 10th Dec. ; Graham to Moore, 7th, 8th Dec. 1808.

² Bentinck had reached Salamanca from Madrid on 1st Dec., having narrowly escaped capture at Arevalo on his way.

cavalry brigade. Stewart had strict orders not to risk 1808. the loss of a man, Moore being, no doubt, anxious to Dec. 12. conceal his movements as far as possible; but on reaching his quarters at Nava del Rey, about twenty miles south of Tordesillas, on the 12th, the Brigadier received information of the presence of eighty Frenchmen, cavalry and infantry, at Rueda, only eight miles away. His aide-de-camp, Dashwood by name, entering the village in disguise, obtained all necessary information; and during the night a squadron of the Eighteenth Hussars surrounded Rueda, put eighteen of the detachment to the sword, and captured thirty-five more, leaving only a few to carry the news to Valladolid. The captured dragoons belonged to Franceschi's cavalry division, and had never dreamed of Moore's proximity to them, being under the impression that he had long ago retreated upon Lisbon. This trifling little success put every one in good humour, though not a man in the army knew whither he was marching. Indeed it was only on that day that Moore, himself still at Salamanca, wrote to Baird, Frere, and Castlereagh that he intended to move from Valladolid upon Palencia and Burgos, to make a diversion by threatening the French communications. He was still in ignorance of the state of Madrid, his latest information being that the French held the Retiro, and that the inhabitants kept their arms; and he was still under the impression that there were only from eighty to ninety thousand French in the north of Spain, though intercepted letters from Junot, otherwise unimportant, spoke of a seventh and eighth corps preparing to cross the frontier. All these things Moore stated plainly to Frere, without mentioning the manner and direction of his movement. The Ambassador had proved himself unworthy of confidence, and was no longer to be admitted to his secrets. He added, however, for Frere's special behoof, that unless the Spaniards took advantage of his diversion, the French could turn their whole force against the British army, in which case there could be no

1808. question as to the consequences. To Castlereagh he Dec. 12. addressed a similar caution; and to Baird he wrote more particular instructions as to the formation of magazines on the line between Astorga and Coruña; for that seaport was henceforward to be his base for all supplies, as well as his refuge in case of retreat. These arrangements were likely to be facilitated by the fact that Sir John Cradock had just left seven hundred thousand dollars at Coruña for the use of the army, and had announced the news in a letter of particular friendliness. It remained, therefore, for Moore only to give warning that his own retreat from Portugal might be cut off, that Cradock might consequently be left to his own resources, and that it would therefore be prudent to keep all military stores at Lisbon afloat.¹

Dec. 13. On the 13th Moore moved his headquarters from Salamanca to Alaejos, and on the same day there was brought to Charles Stewart an intercepted despatch, the bearer of which had been murdered by peasants near Segovia. It was addressed by Berthier to Soult, dated the 10th of December, and contained not only mention of Soult's own force—two divisions of infantry and four regiments of cavalry—but bade him at once seize Leon, Zamora, and Benavente, and overrun the province of Leon. There was, said Berthier, nothing to stop him, for the British were in full retreat upon Lisbon, and therefore, as soon as Soult had verified the fact of the British retirement, he was to push forward rapidly. The Marshal then added the following summary of the French positions at that moment. The advanced guard was at Talavera ready to move on Badajoz; Bessières was pursuing the beaten army of Castaños towards

¹ Cradock to Moore, 5th Dec.; Moore to Cradock, 10th Dec.; to Baird, Frere, and Castlereagh, 12th Dec. 1808. It is pleasant to see the terms in which Cradock and Moore addressed each other. Cradock wrote, “I look upon myself as your coadjutor at Lisbon, and am ready to exert myself in any way to further your operations.” To which Moore answered, “From what I know of you, I have no fear of the service not being carried on amicably and well between us.”

Valencia ; the fifth corps under Mortier was moving 1808. to Zaragoza ; the head of the eighth corps under Junot had arrived at Vitoria, and the whole of it would probably concentrate at Burgos. The letter ended by an intimation that Madrid was perfectly quiet and submissive.

The capture of this despatch, which came to Moore's hand on the 14th, was an extraordinary piece of good Dec. 14. luck. Had Moore pursued his way to Burgos, as he had intended, he would have found Junot's corps awaiting him there, Soult's on his left flank, and the army of Madrid able to close upon his right rear in five or six marches. Now, however, he saw his position clearly. The French forces were evidently far more numerous than the Spaniards had reported them to be ; but, with the exception of one corps, they were remote from him, and the Emperor clearly conceived the British army to be retiring to Lisbon. Moore's mind was soon made up. He ordered Baird to move to Benavente, and changed the course of his own march to Toro, with a view to effecting a junction as soon as possible. To Romana he did not write at once. knowing that one of the Marquis's officers was on the way to consult him concerning the uniting of the Spanish and the British forces.¹ The allied troops could now be used for a definite purpose. Soult's corps stood alone and isolated on the Carrion, with a strength of little more than half of Moore's, and could be attacked with advantage, whether it advanced or remained stationary, without fear of interference from the French in the south or east.

On that same day Stewart's cavalry, examining the country towards Tordesillas, met parties of French horse sent out by Franceschi and drove them back, but not before the enemy had ascertained that the whole of Moore's force was moving northward. Franceschi accordingly evacuated Valladolid on the morrow, and

¹ The intercepted letter and others are printed in *Moore's Campaign*, pp. 123-125.

1808. retired to Medina de Rio Seco. On the 15th likewise Dec. 15. Moore's force crossed the Douro in two columns at Zamora and Toro ; and on the succeeding days pursued its way northward, the right column by Villalpando and the left by Valderas, upon Mayorga. At Valderas Baird's corps from Benavente joined the main body ; Dec. 20. and by the 20th the entire army was for the first time concentrated at Mayorga. During the advance, the movement was screened by the British cavalry to the east and north-east ; and a squadron of the Eighteenth Light Dragoons, on learning of the evacuation of Valladolid, entered that city, and carried off the Spanish Intendant lately appointed by the French, together with about £3000 which was found in the Treasury.¹ Elsewhere small parties of the British cavalry were in constant contact with like parties of the French during these days, invariably driving them back and taking a few prisoners.² One of the officers, Major Antignac, who was thus captured, gave important, and on the whole correct, information as to the numbers and disposition of the French army, stating among other matters the number and station of the Imperial Guard, of which Moore had hitherto been ignorant. Charles Stewart, to whom Antignac

¹ Balagny, iii. 621, declares that the £3000 was raised as a contribution ; but this is a mistake. It was in the Intendant's treasury, and was overlooked by the Eighteenth, who were more intent upon a large consignment of cotton, worth £30,000. Stewart, however, rightly thought it best to secure the money, and promised Castlereagh a " good account of it shortly." Whether it became prize to the Eighteenth does not appear. *Londonderry MSS.*

² Stewart in his letters, as also in his memoirs, speaks of about 100 prisoners and 60 horses. Balagny (iii. 587) affirms, on the other hand, that the losses of Franceschi's division, according to the regimental returns, did not exceed 23 killed and 57 prisoners during the whole month of December, and amounted between the 13th and 21st to only 13 killed and 34 prisoners, two of them officers. The discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that 30 French invalids, possibly infantry, were captured in the hospital at Valladolid, while several of the prisoners captured at Rueda were also of the infantry. It is due to Charles Stewart to say that he was always most modest over his achievements in the field.

imparted these particulars, was greatly impressed by 1808. them ; and in a letter to Castlereagh he delivered his opinion that the French force was undoubtedly enormous, and that the utmost to be hoped for was the return of the British army after two or three victories. "One hears of nothing," he wrote, "but the myriads of the French ; and after much consideration I am apt to lean to a strong fear that the great game is over."¹

In the course of the march Moore had as usual been plagued by the Junta and by Frere. On the 16th there came to his headquarters Mr. Stuart Dec. 16. and Don Francisco Xavier Caro, bearing a letter dated from Truxillo on the 8th, from the Secretary of that body. The purport of this document was that the Junta deprecated Moore's proposed retreat, and promised him fourteen thousand picked men of Romana's corps at once and thirty thousand Galician and Asturian levies within a month, if he would maintain himself in Spain. It so happened that on that same day Moore had received accounts of Romana's army from two persons who had studied it intimately. The first was Romana himself, who declared that he had twenty thousand men under arms, but that two-thirds of them needed re-clothing from head to foot, and that nearly all were without haversacks, pouches, or shoes. The second was Colonel Symes, a very capable British officer, who described them as stout men, but half-naked, untrained, undisciplined, ill-commanded, and so ill-armed that at least one-third of their muskets would not explode. Moreover, Romana, far from being ready to join Moore, was, as Symes ascertained, sending troops and artillery to the rear. The Marquis was careful not to report this fact to the British General, though he declared himself unable to move, lest he should make it possible for Soult's force on the Carrion, which he

¹ *Londonderry MSS.*, Charles Stewart to Castlereagh, 19th Dec. 1808.

1808. reckoned at ten thousand men, to enter Asturias and Dec. Galicia.

Nevertheless, astounding though it may seem, it was Romana himself, and no other, who was responsible for the letter brought by Caro from the Junta. On the 5th of December he had written to Frere, to the Spanish Minister of War, and to Don Venturo Escalante, condemning Moore's project of retiring into Portugal, and averring that, if his own forces were joined to those of Moore, they could overrun the country, relieve the other armies, and drive the French out of the land. "I have now united twenty thousand excellent troops," he wrote to Escalante, "and only wait to shoe and clothe them in order to move. . . . Do not let the British retire, and tell them that in six days at latest I intend to march to join them." This is a good instance of the Spanish national failing, *jactancia*, with which course the Junta sympathised; and Frere, who attended the Junta's councils, was too blind and ignorant to perceive the truth. In fact the Junta was in such consternation over Moore's resolution to retire, that one or two members proposed to persuade him to a new decision by giving him the supreme command of all the armies. But Frere hastily interposed with the remark that the British Government had formed no such pretensions; whereupon the Junta asked him to name two persons who should go to England and represent Moore's conduct to the Cabinet. Such a proposal was far more to Frere's mind; for he had so far lost his self-control as to write a letter to the General which, among other ebullitions of temper, contained the following sentence: "This much I must say, that if the British Army had been sent abroad for the express purpose of doing the utmost possible mischief to the Spanish cause, with the single exception of not firing a shot against their troops, they would, according to the measures now announced as about to be pursued, have completely fulfilled their purpose."

This letter was now handed by Stuart to Moore,

who gave it back to him to read and left him to make 1808. his own reflections upon it. The General did not reply to it until some days later, when he simply enclosed a copy of his former letter in answer to those brought by Charmilli. Caro was reassured by the discovery that Moore was actually advancing instead of retiring, though he was somewhat abashed when the General asked for an explanation why the Junta had endangered his whole army by requiring him to march to Madrid, at a moment when some of its members were actually drawing up the capitulation of the city. To Romana there was nothing to be said. On the following day a further letter was received from Dec. 17. him, announcing that he was about to retire into Galicia; and Moore, accepting the fact without comment or reproach, simply asked him to leave open the road by Astorga and Villafranca upon Coruña. Thus at length the British General was free from all external plagues, and could devote himself wholly to his military operations.¹

His first act after the concentration of his army was to redistribute it into four divisions under Baird, Hope, Fraser, and Edward Paget, and two Light Brigades under Charles Alten and Robert Craufurd.²

¹ The letters received by Moore on the 16th and 17th, and his answers, are printed in *Moore's Campaign*, pp. 130-145. Romana's letters to Frere, the Junta, and Escalante are enclosed in Frere to Sec. of State, 14th Dec. 1808. Stuart's account of his mission to Moore is enclosed in Frere to Sec. of State, 27th Dec. 1808.

² Moore's army:—

Cavalry. Lord Paget.

Slade's brigade, 10th, 15th L.D.

Stewart's brigade, 7th, 18th L.D.; 3rd L.D.K.G.L.*

Infantry.

1st division: Sir David Baird.

Warde's brigade, 1 and 2/1st Guards.

* Paget made over the 7th to Stewart before the 19th of December, in the face of orders from the Horse Guards that Slade was to have the 7th, 10th, and 15th. (*Londonderry MSS.*, Charles Stewart to Castlereagh, 19th Dec. 1808.) Paget was quite right, for Slade was useless and Stewart very capable and enterprising.

1808. Of Hope's division one brigade, that of Leith, was still far in rear, having been the foremost of Baird's troops in his first retreat; and the Eighty-second, which was the last of the battalions to leave Lisbon, had not yet come up. The entire force, after deduction of these battalions and of some four thousand sick, numbered from twenty-three to twenty-four thousand men, or say twenty-six thousand of all ranks.¹ Though the weather was bitterly cold, and the recent marches had been along snow-covered roads, the men were in good health and order; their behaviour so far had been exemplary; and their confidence in themselves was, if anything, rather too great.² Of the divisional

Bentinck's brigade, 1/4th, 1/42nd, 1/50th.†

Manningham's brigade, 3/1st, 1/26th, 1/81st.

2nd division : Sir J. Hope.

Leith's brigade, 51st, 2/59th, 76th.

Hill's " 2nd, 1/5th, 2/14th, 1/32nd.

Catlin Craufurd's, 1/36th, 1/71st, 1/92nd.†

3rd division : Lt.-Gen. Mackenzie Fraser.

Beresford's brigade, 1/6th, 1/9th, 2/23rd, 2/43rd.

Fane's " 1/38th, 1/79th, 1/82nd.†

Reserve division : Edward Paget.

Anstruther's brigade, 20th, 1/52nd, 1/95th.

Disney's " 1/28th, 1/91st.

1st Light Brigade, Robert Craufurd, 1/43rd, 2/52nd, 2/95th.

2nd Light Brigade, Charles Alten, K.G.L., 1st and 2nd light batts., K.G.L.†

Artillery. 11 brigades, 66 guns.

Staff corps. 3 troops Waggon-train.

¹ Napier, i., Appendix 25.

² The consensus of opinion in all ranks of the army as to its superiority to every other was remarkable. Wellesley, who had done much to inspire the force with confidence, certainly shared it; and even Generals like Charles Stewart believed that Moore's army could beat twice its number of French. Our men were certainly much greater in stature, which accounts in part for the fact, and probably they were conscious in a vague way that the British infantry tactics were the better, contrasting the noisiness of the French attack with the cool silence of their own ranks when awaiting it.

† Moore had rearranged the brigades of his own force on the 1st of December (Moorsom's *History of the 52nd*, p. 91). Those which were left unaltered are marked †.

Generals, all were good, Hope and Edward Paget 1808. being even excellent, while Lord Paget at the head of Dec. the cavalry was full of audacity and enterprise. The Brigadiers also, taken altogether, were capable officers, Hill and Beresford being both superior men, and Manningham and Robert Craufurd very successful trainers of soldiers. The worst of them, probably, was Slade, whose brigade Paget had wisely weakened to strengthen that of Charles Stewart. Among the battalion-commanders were two of exceptional merit and capacity, Charles Napier of the Fiftieth and Sidney Beckwith of the Ninety-fifth. Colonel Robe having been left at Lisbon, the artillery was under the command of Colonel Harding, a very good officer, whose greatest difficulty was to maintain his supply of horses. So bad were the roads that every artillery-carriage, of whatsoever description, needed a team of six, long six-pounders a team of eight, and twelve-pounders a team of ten; and the result was that the ammunition-waggons were drawn by a motley collection of horses, mules, and oxen. Nevertheless the corps was in high order, the discipline good, and the men particularly well-behaved.¹ The weak points of the army were the inexperience and want of training in the Staff, and the undisciplined spirit of the subordinate officers.

Meanwhile Soult, being apprised that the British were in motion, became naturally anxious. The British cavalry, however, had so effectually screened Moore's movements northwards that, notwithstanding the action of Franceschi's reconnoitring parties, the French General was unaware that the corps of Baird and Moore were united; and consequently he still looked for them to effect their junction at Valladolid. He stood fast, therefore, wrote to Junot on the 19th for reinforcements, and on the 20th ordered his two divisions of infantry to concentrate at Carrion and Saldaña,

¹ Duncan's *History of the Royal Artillery*, ii. 213-214.

1808. while the cavalry-brigades of Debelle and Franceschi covered the movement at Sahagun and Mayorga. His design was, as soon as some of Junot's troops should arrive, to take the offensive on the 22nd either against Romana, or against Baird at Astorga. Debelle with two regiments, counting in all about five hundred sabres, had been at Sahagun for a fortnight, and having encountered some of Romana's horse in a north-westerly direction towards Mansilla, appears to have turned all his attention to that quarter. In any case he

Dec. 20. was, on the evening of the 20th, still unaware that Paget and two regiments of dragoons were concentrated at Melgar de Abajo, only twelve miles to south-west of him.¹ Paget was equally ignorant of the enemy's presence at Sahagun, but being by good fortune informed of it, while actually moving thither from Mayorga, he resolved at once to surprise Debelle.

Paget marched, therefore, on the same night with the Tenth, Fifteenth, a few men of the Seventh,² and four Horse-artillery guns. He had also given orders to Slade to lead the Tenth, with two guns, immediately against the town from the west, and to drive the enemy from it, intending himself to wait on the eastern side and to cut off the French retreat. The night was dark and bitterly cold, with severe frost and showers of sleet. In some places the snow had drifted to a depth of four feet ; in others the road was covered with a sheet of ice, compelling the hussars to dismount and lead their horses. Even with this precaution, many horses fell, and one man had his leg broken. After traversing about eight miles, Paget led the Fifteenth to the east bank of the Cea, leaving Slade to follow the road parallel to it on the Dec. 21. other side of the river. Between five and six o'clock

¹ Mr. Oman (i. 535) calls the distance nine miles, evidently trusting to Londonderry's description of the distance as three leagues. From Charles Stewart's letters, however, I find that he meant Spanish leagues of four miles to the league.

² Captain Thornhill and twelve men. Presumably they acted as Paget's escort, being of his own regiment.

Paget's advanced guard fell in with the French grand ^{1808.} guard and took five prisoners; but the remainder of ^{Dec. 21.} the enemy galloped away and gave the alarm.¹ The French horses were ready saddled and bridled, and the men were sleeping by them in the stables, so that they turned out very rapidly; and Debelle was able to lead them out with no loss of time by the eastern gate to form in the plain. They were hardly assembled before Paget came up, having quickened his pace lest he should be too late. Debelle had prudently drawn up his squadrons behind a rugged ravine, which checked the first advance of the British against him; but Paget, wheeling aside, presently found the means of turning or crossing the obstacle; and Debelle then retired, apparently to eastward.² Paget followed the French in column of divisions,³ moving at a sharp trot, parallel to their line of march but at some distance in rear. Debelle manœuvred to cross the head of Paget's column, probably intending to wheel into line and charge the British obliquely, while they were forming line to their front. Paget foiled this movement by changing direction, presumably to his left, so as to fall upon the French flank; and Debelle then formed his brigade into two lines in a vineyard, and halted. Paget trotted on until he had passed Debelle's left flank, halted likewise, and wheeled quietly into line. Paget was superior in

¹ Londonderry and Neale, who were neither of them present, say that but one man of the grand guard escaped; but Cannon's *History of the Fifteenth Hussars* says nothing of this, and the French accounts do not bear it out. The Fifteenth would not have failed to record the fact if only one man had escaped; and indeed the regimental history speaks of the French as a patrol only.

² The *History of the Fifteenth Hussars* says that the French retired "towards a bridge on their left." Assuming that they were facing to south, from which quarter Paget was advancing, their left would mean of course to eastward, where there was a bridge over the river Valderaduey.

³ That is to say of half-troops. The Fifteenth at this time had eight troops. Taking its numbers at 520, each division would be of sixteen files; and each squadron would consist of four such divisions.

1808. numbers, having at least five hundred sabres in the Dec. 21. field, whereas Debelle had not at most above four hundred and fifty;¹ but, apart from all question of inferiority in strength, Debelle seems to have been overawed by Paget's quickness in manœuvre and by the beautiful accuracy of the movements of the Fifteenth.

Paget presently advanced at the gallop and charged; while Debelle's brigade remained at the halt, and the leading regiment, the 1st "Provisional Chasseurs," in his first line, opened fire with carbines from the saddle. Such a fire was not likely to check a good British regiment. In a few moments the Fifteenth crashed into the Chasseurs, broke them instantly and threw them headlong back. Debelle's second regiment, the 8th Dragoons, being drawn up, not in echelon, but immediately in rear of the Chasseurs, was at once thrown into disarray by the rush of the fugitives, and being attacked in turn was easily broken. Debelle himself was overthrown and trampled under foot; and for some minutes the British and French were mingled together in wild confusion. The Fifteenth were the better mounted, and the French the better armed, for the unwieldy fur-caps² of the British hussars fell from their heads, or if they remained on them, offered no protection against French sabres; while the British swords, short,

¹ The Fifteenth embarked with just 700 sergeants and rank and file, and 682 horses. On the 19th of December they were returned at 527 rank and file. Debelle had in all 500 sabres, some of which were, to Paget's own knowledge, detached in other directions. The action took place in the dim light of early dawn; and British accounts of the French numbers are founded on reports of the Spanish peasants, who stated Debelle's force at 700. Having arbitrarily taken this number for Debelle's men, British writers seem to have conspired to make an equally arbitrary reduction of the British force, so as to make the odds against it two to one.

² The fur-caps were what are now called busbies, but Mr. Busby had not yet arisen to give them their modern name. The caps were very tall, so much so that a member of the House of Commons described them as "monstrous muffs." The busby with its bag is a development of the red night-cap with a border of fur, worn by the Hungarian irregular horse or hussars.

broad, and blunted by their metal scabbards, were so 1808. heavy that it was difficult for the men to cut truly with them. By desperate struggles about half of the French escaped, and made their way northward to Saldaña.

The Tenth Hussars had no share in the action. They arrived at the western gate at the appointed hour, half-past six, but found the town empty, and, on passing through it, only joined Paget in time to take a belated part in the pursuit. However, they secured the baggage and transport of Debelle's brigade, besides, no doubt, a certain number of men who had been left behind. Altogether the losses of the French, apart from several men killed, amounted to twelve officers and one hundred and forty-five men taken prisoners, both wounded and unwounded, one hundred and twenty-five horses and several mules. The loss of the Fifteenth did not exceed two men and four horses killed, two officers, eighteen men, and ten horses wounded. Curiously enough, the French carried off with them twenty-six British horses, probably riderless animals which had galloped after them in their retreat. Altogether it was a brilliant little affair, and very creditable to Paget and the Fifteenth, though as a surprise of Debelle's force it was completely foiled by the vigilance of the French dragoons.¹

At Saldaña Debelle rallied the wreck of his brigade, Dec. 21. reduced now to a single regiment by the practical annihilation of the Chasseurs, and reported his mishap to Soult, with the very curious embellishment that the Hussars of the King's German Legion had taken part

¹ The account here given is founded on Cannon's *Records of the Fifteenth Hussars*, Liddell's *History of the Tenth Hussars*, which are the best authorities on the British side, supplemented by the account in Londonderry's *Peninsular War*, Neale's *Campaign*, and Vivian's *Memoirs*. But none of the three last named were present at the action. For the French side see Balagny, iii. 522-528, 632-635, and *Mémoires de St. Chamans*. As to the defects of the British swords, see *Mémoires de Chlapowski*, p. 146. Looking to the facts brought forward by Balagny, which were not open to Mr. Oman, I differ from the latter's estimate of the action as perhaps the most brilliant exploit of the British cavalry during the Peninsular War.

1808. in the action, supported by a column of infantry.¹ Soult from this false intelligence deduced the perfectly correct conclusion that the corps of Moore and Baird were about to unite at Astorga; and he at once renounced his plan for taking the offensive. He realised that his situation was serious, but faced it with perfect serenity, writing to Junot to come to his help with his entire corps, and to the Commandant at Burgos to send him all the cavalry that could be spared. At the same time Soult recalled his own cavalry to Carrion, but ordered Franceschi not to quit Palencia until relieved by Junot's infantry. Meanwhile Moore's infantry, following in rear of his cavalry, also reached Sahagun on the day of the action; and the General decided to halt for one day to give the troops a rest after their hard marches through the snow, and to

Dec. 22. enable his supplies to come up. During the halt at Sahagun Moore received from Romana a letter, in which the Marquis explained that his proposed retreat had been due only to the retrograde motions of Baird, and that he was now ready to co-operate with the British in the movement against Soult on the Carrion. A letter arrived also from Frere at this time, expressing much gratification over Moore's advance, and conveying the extraordinary misintelligence that the surrender of Madrid was still doubtful, that the French forces in that city did not exceed twenty-six thousand men, and that a French attack upon the Spanish army of Aragon on the 2nd of December had been repulsed. There is something almost pathetic in the tenacity with which the Central Junta clung to its vain imaginations, and the ready credulity with which they were accepted, in spite of countless undeceptions, by the absent-minded Frere.²

¹ As it happened, the regiments of the K.G.L. were pushed forward independently towards Carrion on this day; and the 3rd Hussars K.G.L. occupied a village 15 miles from it. Possibly this corps was seen by Debelle's officers during the retreat.

² Balagny, iii. 528-529; Romana to Moore, 19th, 21st Dec.; Frere to Moore, 14th Dec. 1808.

For some reason, probably owing to the exhaustion ^{1808.} of the transport-animals, Moore prolonged his halt ^{Dec. 23.} until the evening of the 23rd, resolving to march during that night in two columns upon Carrión, and on the following night to advance to Saldaña, so as to attack Soult at daybreak. Every preparation was made for establishing hospitals for a large number of wounded ; and the troops, rightly construing this to mean that they would be speedily in action, were in high spirits. On the morning of the 23rd came a second letter from Romana, announcing that he was ready to move with ten thousand men only, the rest of his force being too ill-equipped for service ; and Moore replied at once by asking him to march upon Mansilla. The right column of the British was actually preparing to set off, when at six o'clock a second messenger came in from Romana with intelligence, dated the 18th of December, from one of his confidential agents, that the French about the Escorial had moved north-westward. This as a matter of fact was not true, for, as shall be seen, Napoleon gave no orders for the march of any troops against the British until the 19th. Consequently it has been represented that it was only by the fortuitous arrival of this false information at Romana's headquarters, that Moore received warning of Napoleon's movements with the main body of the French army. This was not the case. Moore had indeed pushed the whole of his cavalry forward to screen his advance to the north, not sparing even a single regiment to watch the western issues from the passes of the Guadarrama ; and the fact has been made a reproach to him by military critics. But he had by this time organised an excellent system of intelligence ; and Romana's note, quite possibly misdated by accident, came only as a confirmation of other reports received during the course of that day. Thus Moore possessed certain intelligence that the French had ordered forage and supplies to be collected about Palencia, and that the corps upon the Tagus had been halted at Talavera,

1808. together with more than one advice that the French were advancing northward from Madrid,¹ and that the Emperor himself had set out for Benavente. The movement which Moore had long expected had begun. He at once countermanded the order to go forward, recalling Hope's division and Alten's brigade, which had already advanced so far that the message did not reach them till midnight.² He informed Romana, who in the course of the evening reported his arrival at Mansilla, that he should retire upon Astorga and there stand, in the hope that with the assistance of Romana he should be able to defend Galicia. "It is playing the enemy's game," he wrote, "to draw him to attack our armies in rotation."

Dec. 24. By the following morning Moore's dispositions for retreat were made out. Hope's and Fraser's divisions
 Dec. 25. marched that same day for Mayorga, on their way to Benavente by Valderas ; and on the Morrow Baird's division was appointed to retire to Valencia de Don Juan, while Sir John himself, with the Reserve division and the two light brigades, should follow Hope and Fraser ; Paget bringing up the rear with his cavalry.³ It was none too soon, for Moore's intelligence told him correctly that large reinforcements were joining Soult. "I was aware," he wrote in his journal while reviewing his advance, "that I risked infinitely too much. . . . If we can steal two marches upon the French we shall be quiet." His army, conscious only of its strength and thirsting for the fight which it had expected on the 24th, relapsed into sullen discontent when its advance was countermanded. The men were quite prepared to face twice their number of the French ; they had counted

¹ Moore's *Campaign*, p. 163.

² Beamish, *History of the King's German Legion*, i. 157-160.

³ *Diary of Sir John Moore*, ii. 287. Moore, however, wrote on the 24th to Romana that his infantry would not retreat till the 25th. Ultimately only the Reserve, the two light brigades, and the cavalry remained at Sahagun till the 25th. The decision not to retreat till the 25th has naturally puzzled Balagny (iii. 643) ; and is not easily to be explained.

upon Moore at any rate to give them a stirring 1808. campaign; and yet he was retiring ignobly to his ships, as so many British commanders had done before him. Only the strong man at the head of the army saw that his great object had been gained merely by a short advance to the north-east, and that now it was everything to steal two marches upon the enemy.¹

¹ *Diary of Sir John Moore*, ii. 285-287; Romana to Moore, 21st, 22nd, 25th Dec.; Moore to Romana, 23rd Dec. 1808 (two letters); *Londonderry MSS.* Charles Stewart to Castlereagh, Jan. 6, 1809.

CHAPTER XXIII

1808. UPON breaking off his review at Madrid on the 19th Dec. 19. of December, Napoleon retired to his maps greatly puzzled. He would not believe that Moore could have risked so hazardous a venture as a stroke upon his communications ; and he resolved not to make any great movement against the British until an advanced corps should have ascertained their whereabouts more accurately. At four o'clock in the afternoon, therefore, he ordered Marshal Ney to be ready to march from Madrid at the next dawn, with two divisions of infantry and Colbert's light cavalry ; directed further reconnaissances to be made from Segovia and Avila towards Valladolid and Salamanca ; and recalled to Madrid Dessolle's division of infantry from the north, as well as a brigade of cavalry which was on march for the Tagus. But a few hours later the three deserters from the fifth battalion of the Sixtieth were brought in ; and their statements convinced him that the British really had taken the offensive, though he conceived them to be marching upon Valladolid. At ten o'clock that night, therefore, he apprised Soult that he was sending a strong force to fall upon Moore's rear, and that Soult himself must manœuvre to second that object. At the same time Lefebvre at Talavera was warned to be ready to march his corps west or north-west, or back to Madrid, at the first summons. Finally, in order to ascertain the exact position of the British, the Emperor ordered further reconnaissance to be made from the valley of the Tagus towards Plasencia and Salamanca, in case, after

all, they should have turned back towards Portugal. 1808.
It is worthy of note that, if Moore obtained his first notice of Napoleon's movement by chance through Romana, Napoleon equally was first apprised of Moore's intentions by the accident that three deserters made their way to the French camp, before Sir John had time to send their battalion back to Portugal.

On the following morning at ten o'clock the Dec. 20.
Emperor gave Ney definite orders to advance at once to Guadarrama ; and in the evening he recalled Ruffin's infantry division of Victor's corps from Toledo to Madrid. On that day no news of any importance reached him, and on the morning of the 21st he was Dec. 21.
still inclined to believe that the bulk of the British force was retreating to Portugal, and that its cavalry only was about Valladolid, awaiting orders to retire likewise. Of the troops at Madrid, therefore, Napoleon ordered only the cavalry of the Guard to advance to Guadarrama. Nevertheless he directed a large body of infantry to be ready to march out at a moment's notice, and commanded Ney to continue his movement to Arevalo, the meeting-place of the roads from Valladolid, Benavente, and Salamanca to Madrid. Early in the afternoon reports reached the Emperor from various quarters, all tending to show that the British infantry was in the region of Valladolid ; while General Tilly from Segovia announced positively that on the 18th his cavalry had been driven back by the British at Tudela on the Douro. This intelligence, though vague and indeed incorrect, for Moore's infantry, as we know, had turned northward upon Mayorga on the 15th without going near Valladolid, decided Napoleon that the time was come to act in earnest. He ordered the division of Lapisse to march at once to Guadarrama and join Ney, at the same time sending orders to Burgos that the leading portions of Junot's corps should, unless otherwise ordered by Soult, proceed to Valladolid and meet Ney likewise. Thus with Junot and Soult holding Moore in front and flank, and with his own troops coming up on the British rear,

1808. he hoped to end the war at a single blow. The only weak point in the arrangement was that the British, with the exception of a handful of cavalry, had never been near Valladolid at all.

Dec. 22. On the next day Napoleon ordered two brigades of dragoons from Avila and Toledo to join Ney, and set Dessolle's division of infantry in movement towards Guadarrama. He also directed Lefebvre to drive back the Spaniards from Almaraz to Truxillo, and to be ready to move upon Ciudad Rodrigo, in case the British should retreat in that direction. Finally, leaving Victor with three divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, besides a few odd battalions and squadrons, to hold Toledo and Madrid, the Emperor set out at noon for Guadarrama, ordering the infantry of the Guard to follow him. He was determined to cross the Sierra and push on to Villa Castin on that day, though for three days snowstorms had raged in the mountains, and Ney had found considerable difficulty in traversing the pass even on the 21st. During a lull in the bad weather the cavalry of the Guard began the ascent of the mountain on the morning of the 22nd, but were caught in a hurricane so furious that the whole column faced about and returned to Guadarrama, which was already filled, owing to the arrival of Lapisse's division. The Emperor was now reported to be close at hand, and the Guard, fearing his reproaches, tried the ascent again, leading their horses. With enormous trouble and hardship they gained the summit and descended to Villa Castin. The Emperor came up just as the division of Lapisse began the long climb of six miles ; the head of the column toiling slowly and painfully forward, the men, numbed with cold, slipping at every step, and swearing that it was impossible to get on. Napoleon, however, was not to be stopped. He was advancing in person against Moore, and was bent upon reading him a lesson, as he said, by intercepting and destroying his army. He rode to the head of the column, with an escort of cavalry of the Guard, the infantry cursing

him and crying out to each other to shoot him as he 1808. passed. There dismounting his escort, he made them go first, leading their horses, to break the force of the storm, and dismounting also himself walked up, surrounded by his Staff, at the head of the infantry. Thus by a great effort he brought Lapisse's division up to the summit, and, after a short halt, pushed on to the foot of the descent, where he stopped for the night, both himself and his men being too weary to go further. Many soldiers perished of cold and fatigue, but the passage was accomplished. On that same day Ney's advanced guard reached Arevalo, while the rearmost brigade of Dessolle's division was still at Madrid, so that the army of forty-two thousand men covered from van to rear a length of sixty-five miles.

The intelligence which reached the Emperor on the 22nd concerning the British, came from two different quarters. General La Houssaye wrote from Avila that they had undoubtedly quitted Salamanca a week before, but in which direction was uncertain ; and a battalion-commander reported to Napoleon in person during the night that the Spaniards at Palacios, on the road from Arevalo to Salamanca, had mistaken his men for the British, and had given him full information as to the march of Moore upon Valladolid. This false news confirmed the Emperor in his erroneous calculations. He guessed that Moore must have shifted his base to Coruña, and determined to hurry his own troops forward more rapidly than ever. In the morning, therefore, he ordered the cavalry of the Guard forward to Arevalo, and directed Lapisse's division to follow them to Adanero, a march of twenty-four miles. It was a severe trial for troops which had undergone such appalling fatigue as that of the previous day ; but the men had recovered themselves, and tramped off with cheers for the Emperor, who came to see them start. On the same day Napoleon moved his headquarters to Villa Castin, where the infantry of the Guard joined him. Ney's advanced troops meanwhile pushed on beyond

Dec. 23.

1808. Rueda, and his leading infantry divisions reached Medina Dec. 23. del Campo ; but all reports still pointed to Valladolid as the region in which the British were to be found. Napoleon, therefore, felt confident of success. Since Moore had changed his base to Coruña, he could not be caught between Valladolid and Salamanca, as he would have been if retreating on Portugal ; but he might be intercepted between Valladolid and Astorga by following the direct road from Medina del Campo to Benavente, and by seizing the bridge of Castro-Gonzalo over the Esla, before the British could occupy it. If the British were still at Valladolid when the French were at Tordesillas—and Colbert's cavalry was already close to Tordesillas—then the French were nearer to the bridge of the Esla than were their adversaries, and the British were trapped. "Put it in the Madrid papers that twenty thousand English are surrounded and lost," Napoleon wrote to Joseph on that evening.¹ But at that very moment Moore was at Sahagun, at least sixty miles north-west of Valladolid, where the Emperor supposed him to be, and was intending, with superior forces, to attack Soult at daybreak of the next morning.²

¹ *Corres. de Napoleón.* 14,616.

² Situation of the French troops acting against the British on the evening of the 23rd of December 1808 :—

NAPOLEON

6th, Ney's Corps	Colbert's cavalry brigade : in advance of Rueda and Medina del Campo.
	Marchand's infantry division : Medina del Campo.
	Maurice Mathieu's infantry division : Arevalo, Martin- muñoz, Fuentes (between Arevalo and Salamanca).
	Lapisse's infantry division : Adanero, Sanchidrian, Pajares.
Caulaincourt's brigade of dragoons : (from Houssaye's cavalry division)	West of Arevalo.
Cavalry of the Guard	Arevalo.
Infantry of the Guard	Villa Castin.
Dessolle's division of infantry	
D'Avenay's brigade of cavalry	
Marisy's brigade of cavalry (from Houssaye's cavalry division)	Guadarrama.
Maupetit's cavalry brigade (from Lefebvre's corps)	Between Talavera and Avila.

In the course of the 24th Moore began his retreat 1808. in two columns, Baird's division moving by Valencia Dec. 24. de Don Juan and crossing the Esla there by ferry and ford; while the divisions of Hope and Fraser, with most of the artillery, took the road by Mayorga and Valderas to cross the Esla by the bridge of Castro-Gonzalo on the way to Benavente.¹ Meanwhile the cavalry made demonstrations towards Saldaña and Carrion, driving in the French outposts with such vigour that Franceschi, fearing a serious attack, withdrew his main body. The Hussars of the German Legion during these operations met their brethren, the Hanoverian Legion in the French service, and defeated them with the loss of ten killed and thirteen prisoners. In the night of the 25th the British cavalry retired Dec. 25. south-westward; but their inroad towards Soult's position had been so confident and audacious that the Marshal, after receiving the reports of his own cavalry-officers, wrote positively to Napoleon that the entire British army was in his front between Sahagun and Villalon.² He stated further that he intended to attack

SOULT

Merle's and Mermet's infantry division	Saldaña and Carrion.
Debelle's and Franceschi's cavalry Brigades	West of Saldaña and Carrion.
Lorge's division of Dragoons	Palencia.
Delaborde's division of infantry (8th corps)	Palencia.

¹ Balagny (iii. 643) criticises Moore's action in taking the bulk of his army on the road by Benavente, on the ground that this was the route that lay nearest to the enemy. The way by the bridge of Mansilla was, he maintains, nearer; the presence of the Spaniards there was no sufficient reason for avoiding it; and the excuse, that Moore needed the bulk of his army to cover the evacuation of his magazines, will not stand examination. I cannot presume to answer the contention of so learned and accomplished an officer; but at the same time it seems to me rash, with our very imperfect knowledge of the circumstances, to judge of such matters merely by maps and compass. Moore dreaded the contact of his army with Romana's for reasons which the sequel shows not to have been without foundation.

² Villalon lies about eighteen miles to south of Sahagun.

1808. it with his whole force on the 27th, and he begged the
 Dec. 25. Emperor to direct Ney's corps to move on Benavente
 and Astorga to cut off its retreat.

By the evening of the 25th Napoleon had fixed his headquarters at Tordesillas; but so far he had received no certain information as to the position of the British army, though all reports tended to show that it was in the vicinity of Sahagun and Leon. There was therefore the greater need for haste if he was to cut off and annihilate his enemy; but his troops were so much exhausted, and his ranks so much weakened by stragglers, that he was fain to order a short march and the best part of a day's rest

Dec. 26. for the 26th. However, a few hours later, at about four in the morning of the 26th, he received a report from Ney that five thousand British troops had been at Villada on the 24th, and fifteen thousand at Mansilla. The first part of this news was more or less correct; and upon its reception the Emperor, having cancelled the orders for a day's halt, dictated preliminary dispositions for a concentration of the army at Medina de Rio Seco, intending to manœuvre from thence against the rear of the British while Soult engaged them in front. The receipt of Soult's letter, above mentioned, at three o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th, caused him to direct an immediate movement of his whole army upon Medina de Rio Seco. His idea was that, while Soult attacked the British in front and Ney overlapped their right flank, he himself should push forward from Tordesillas with the bulk of the army, cut off their retreat, and make an end of them.¹ On the same night he directed his brother Joseph to publish in the newspapers that thirty-six thousand British were surrounded; adding that the news of such a success could not fail to reach him before long.²

Dec. 27. On the morning of the 27th fresh intelligence reached the Emperor that Ney's advanced cavalry had, on the previous day, come into contact with the British

¹ Balagny, iv. 3-23.

² *Ibid.* iv. 130-131.

cavalry near Mayorga. Such was indeed the fact, a ^{1808.} squadron of Chasseurs having encountered the British ^{Dec. 27.} Fifteenth Hussars and the Third Hussars of the German Legion, and left some prisoners in their hands. A report from another party of the same regiment of Chasseurs stated that they had come upon a convoy of ox-waggons, escorted by three hundred British infantry, near Castro-Gonzalo, and had killed or wounded twenty-nine men; while they had also seen near Benavente a bivouac of two or three thousand men. The inhabitants about Benavente confirmed these numbers, and added that the British had advanced by Leon upon Saldaña. Napoleon therefore concluded that the British were still in position about Sahagun, and that the cavalry encountered at Mayorga were covering their right flank. He pushed his headquarters forward, accordingly, early in the morning to Medina de Rio Seco; and at two o'clock in the afternoon sent on the whole of Ney's corps north-westward upon the roads towards Valderas and Mayorga.

The troops marched till nightfall through pouring rain and deep sticky mud, without finding any enemy; and Soult's army, which on this same day had marched southward to Villada and Cisneros, met with precisely the same experience. Colbert's cavalry reported that late in the evening they had seen the British near Valderas and Mayorga, but that it was too dark to ascertain any details concerning them; and a party of Polish light horse announced that, earlier in the afternoon, they had come upon posts of British infantry guarding the bridge of Castro-Gonzalo, and had captured the baggage of Slade's brigade, driving off the escort of cavalry and forcing it to swim across the Esla.¹ Until these last reports reached him, Napoleon had conjectured that Moore had changed his plan and, supposing Ney to be isolated, was about to attack him. The thought had troubled the Emperor

¹ Balagny, iv. 33. None of the British regimental histories mention this incident; but the general fact is confirmed by Napier.

1808. not a little, for, owing to the adverse weather, the in-Dec. 27. famous state of the roads, and the exhaustion of the troops after their previous exertions, Ney's corps had left a vast number of stragglers behind, and was consequently far from strong. Realising now, however, that the British were retreating, Napoleon resolved to fall upon their flank before they could reach Benavente, or at any rate to keep them engaged until the rest of his army could come up and crush them.

He therefore ordered that Marshal Bessières should Dec. 28. march at six o'clock on the following morning for Aguilar de Campós on the road to Mayorga, with all the cavalry that he could collect—some four thousand sabres—and that at the same time General Lefebvre-Desnoëttes should push on with two regiments straight upon Benavente. This would give the Emperor no more than fifteen thousand or sixteen thousand men for immediate action; but these, he hoped, would suffice at any rate to arrest Moore's further retreat until the infantry of the Guard, with the divisions of Lapisse and Desselles, should struggle forward and drive the British into the Esla. The weather on the 28th was almost the worst that the French had encountered. Rain fell unceasingly, and the soil was already so much soaked since the thaw of the 24th that the roads were knee-deep, and even waist-deep, in mud. Nevertheless the troops, guessing from the presence of the Emperor in their midst that a battle was at hand, marched on with indomitable spirit. It was all to no purpose. Not a redcoat was found about Mayorga or Valderas; and the Emperor realised that the British had crossed the Esla and were gone.¹

Moore, as we have seen, had arranged to pass the Esla in two columns at Valencia de Don Juan and Castro-Dec. 26. Gonzalo. On the 26th Baird's division reached the river at the former point, and with some danger, for the water was rising rapidly, succeeded in taking their vehicles and some of the infantry over by the ford.

¹ Balagny, iv. 14-38.

On the same day the divisions of Hope and Fraser crossed by the bridge of Castro-Gonzalo and reached Benavente. All day the rain poured down, and the roads were knee-deep in clay. Panic had spread among the people owing to rumours of the French advance. The peasants deserted the villages, and the drivers of the hired waggons absconded with their teams. Many of the oxen that remained were broken down by fatigue, and many of their waggons were in the worst repair. All this did not improve the temper of the British troops, who were already furious over the order to retreat. They blamed the Spaniards for leaving them to fight the battles of their country instead of coming out to fight for themselves ; and from blaming the Spaniards to punishing them the step was short. At Mayorga, Valderas, and Benavente there were disgraceful scenes of pillage and wanton destruction, the men refusing to wait for regular distribution of food and fuel, but seizing what victuals they could find, and tearing down the woodwork of houses for their fires. It is quite possible that these evils were due in part to the inefficiency of the Staff, in neglecting to provide for the comfort of the troops. But it seems certain that they were in great measure attributable to the officers, who were as angry as the men over the retreat, and had been canvassing the movements of the Commander-in-chief with a freedom that had shaken discipline. Moore on the 27th issued a stern general order laying the entire blame for outrages directly upon the officers, and reminding them that he knew well what he was doing, and would fight when he pleased and where he pleased, and not otherwise. Unfortunately the mischief had gone too far, and was indeed too deeply ingrained in the army, to be expelled by a general order.

On the 26th also, as we have seen, the British cavalry first came in touch with that of Napoleon's own army. A hundred men of the 15th Chasseurs entered Mayorga and made a few prisoners among the Fifteenth Hussars, but were obliged to abandon them and were

1808. driven back themselves, with the loss of some men
 Dec. 26. captured, by the German Hussars. Near Mayorga also
 the Tenth Hussars met some of Soult's cavalry, and
 defeated them with the loss of over a hundred
 prisoners;¹ indeed by this time the contempt of the
 British for the French horse was such that they cheer-
 fully engaged greatly superior numbers. The work
 of the cavalry on this day was, however, very severe.
 Forty horses in Slade's brigade alone succumbed, and
 had to be shot at the close of the march.

At nightfall Paget's regiments halted at Valderas
 and Villalon, but continued their retreat upon Ben-
 Dec. 27. vente before dawn of the next day. Soult's cavalry
 clung to their heels, but was driven back from time
 to time in a succession of brilliant little attacks;
 and by the evening four out of the five regi-
 ments had passed over the bridge of Castro-Gonzalo.
 Craufurd's brigade, which had meanwhile guarded the
 bridge, now began the destruction of it, labouring in
 torrents of rain and under the very eyes of the French
 cavalry. The masonry was so good that the work
 took much time; but the rear-guard was never seriously
 Dec. 28. molested. In the course of the following afternoon the
 whole of the huge force of cavalry under Bessières came
 up before the bridge; but beyond a trifling skirmish
 with the Hussars of the King's German Legion, who
 remained on the east bank of the river, there was no
 engagement. Colbert wandered up and down beside
 the water, seeking for a ford, but could find none

¹ Only thus can I explain Londonderry's account of the successful
 action of the Tenth Hussars. Balagny (iv. 23), assuming that the
 Tenth had to do with the 15th Chasseurs, rejects the whole story;
 but Londonderry must have been present himself, and would
 never have invented such a narrative, complete in all details.
 Moreover, Soult's cavalry, having already been defeated by the
 British, was the less likely to stand up to them. And, lastly, Slade
 recorded in his journal the destruction of the captured French
 horses (Liddell's *History of the Tenth Hussars*, p. 88). On the
 other hand, the unimportant action of the 15th Chasseurs on the
 same day is noticed by Beamish, *History of the King's German Legion*,
 i. 160.

in the swollen state of the stream. In the evening 1808. Lefebvre-Desnoëttes attempted to force the bridge with Dec. 28. some dismounted men, but was easily repulsed. The German Hussars then passed over the river; a little after midnight the bridge was successfully blown up ; Dec. 29. and the French were left fuming with impatience on the wrong side of the flood.

Though disappointed of his great enveloping movement, Napoleon still hoped to overtake the British and perhaps to force them into action ; and he therefore gave orders to his cavalry and one division of infantry to pass the river as soon as possible, so as to ascertain whether Moore had retired on Zamora or on Astorga. The water, however, was still high, and it was found impracticable to execute his commands. Nothing was to be seen of the British in the plain of Benavente except small parties of cavalry watching the fords. Emboldened by this show of weakness, Lefebvre-Desnoëttes at length succeeded in finding a ford near Castro-Gonzalo, and crossed it, rather swimming than walking, with three squadrons of Chasseurs of the Guard and a small mixed squadron of Mamelukes and light horse, in all about five hundred and fifty men. Colonel Otway, who was in command of the British picquets, at once called them in, but for some reason they were slow in obeying ; and the leading squadron of the Chasseurs pressed them so hard that they fell back hastily to within half a mile of Benavente. Fearing that the main body of the British might be surprised in its quarters, Otway resolved to make a stand, and took up a position by the suburbs, with his flanks protected by the walls of some gardens. Here he was joined by the inlying picquet of the Seventh and Tenth Hussars and by a small party of the Eighteenth, which brought his force up to nearly a hundred and fifty men. Meanwhile the foremost squadron of the Chasseurs, isolated by its advance, halted to await the arrival of the rest of the regiment ; and Otway, having slight superiority of numbers, promptly moved forward to the attack. The French

1808. received him at the halt, and were of course completely Dec. 29. broken, their commander being killed at the first onset.

But their second squadron, coming up, reversed the balance of the fight, and compelled the British in their turn to retire, with considerable loss, until three troops of the Hussars of the Legion came forward to their rescue.

Lord Paget and General Stewart now appeared on the ground, and, while the latter took charge of Otway's men, Paget galloped off at full speed to fetch the Tenth Hussars. Stewart having rallied his Hussars, advanced again to the charge, while the two French squadrons were re-forming, and was once more received by them at the halt. The ground, however, was so heavy that the British horses could gather no speed. The French were not broken, and a confused struggle with the sabre was brought to an end by the arrival of the rear squadrons of the French, who, charging the right flank of the British, bore them back to the walls of Benavente. There in the nick of time the remainder of the German Hussars came up to save them. Upon their appearance the French were checked; but Lefebvre, having now the whole of his force under his hand, formed them into line, and advanced rapidly to a final attack. His sabres numbered about five hundred, exceeding those of the British so far engaged by some fifty. But Paget meanwhile had rallied his squadrons, and concealed the Tenth and Eighteenth Hussars in readiness to fall upon the French flank. He now skilfully drew back the troops that were in the open, so as to lure the French to more favourable ground; and Lefebvre, confident that the game was in his own hands, came on at speed. The two opposing lines were not more than a hundred yards apart when, to his consternation, the Tenth, with Paget in person at their head, appeared galloping down upon the French left flank, with the Eighteenth¹ in support. It was a bad moment

¹ Balagny says the Seventh, but Beamish says the Eighteenth. The regimental histories of the Seventh and Eighteenth say that their picquets only were engaged; which seems to be the fact.

for the French commander ; and in the choice of evils, 1808. he chose the greater, namely to retreat. He gave the word to wheel about by troops,¹ and had just time to execute the manœuvre before the British closed with him. Then ensued a race for the river. The Chasseurs, being well mounted, kept their lead ; while the British spurred after them at the top of their speed, amid shrieks of "Viva los Ingleses" from the population of Benavente, which was enjoying the spectacle from the walls. Every Frenchman who lagged was at once cut down or taken, but the mass of the Chasseurs was not to be caught. They preserved tolerable order until they reached the river, but there they gave way to something like panic and crowded all together into the water, hampering and oversetting each other, with the result that not a few were swept away by the current and drowned. Those whose horses refused to enter the stream were killed or captured, among the taken Lefebvre-Desnoëttes himself, whose horse was wounded, and who, as became his position, was the last to arrive at the bank.² On reaching the river the British dismounted, and opened fire with their carbines ; and the French, on gaining the opposite bank, at once rallied and returned the fire. But a couple of British Horse-artillery guns galloped up and dispersed them with a few rounds of grape ; and the action was thus brought to an end.

The loss of the French was two officers and seven men killed, seven officers and ninety-one men wounded, three officers and forty-two men taken ; that of the British was twelve killed and over seventy wounded. The heaviest sufferers were the Third Hussars of the Legion, the only corps engaged which was present in force, who had three killed and forty-three, including

¹ "Demi-tour par pelotons." There would, I take it, be at least four *pelotons* to the squadron.

² He had surrendered to a hussar of the German Legion ; but an English trooper of the Tenth, laying hold of his bridle, carried him off before the German had realised the value of his prize, and was promoted sergeant for his pains. Beamish, i. 165-166.

1808. two officers, wounded. The proportion of killed was Dec. 29. remarkably small, pointing to bad weapons and bad swordsmanship on both sides. Many of the Chasseurs escaped with black eyes and bruises on the arms and back, who, if the British had cut true, would have been left on the field. The Germans alone appear to have been able to handle the broad blade, with which they inflicted some frightful wounds. Upon the whole the action was decidedly creditable to the British, though it seems certain that they were in a manner surprised at the outset. But for the foresight of Major von Linsingen, who refused to unsaddle the horses of the German Hussars in spite of permission to do so, Paget's squadrons might very well have been caught unprepared and destroyed in detail. Nor does Lefebvre-Desnoëttes appear to have handled his squadrons well. At the outset he threw them into action piecemeal, one or two at a time, and did not attack with the whole four until Paget was ready for him with a superior force. He may have been nervous, for he had special orders not to compromise his regiment; but that fault he had already committed by crossing the river alone, when there were two to three thousand more horsemen under Bessières by whom he might have been supported. Moreover, he compromised it later in the worst possible fashion by receiving the British charge at the halt, a blunder so grave that it is almost inexplicable. Napoleon was not a witness of the engagement, as was rumoured in the British army at the time, for he was at Valderas; but he learned of the mishap on the same afternoon, and was not only much distressed for a favourite regiment but considerably annoyed over the mismanagement of the whole affair. Nor can it be denied that he had good cause for his dissatisfaction.¹

¹ The best account of the combat at Benavente is in Beamish's *History of the King's German Legion*, i. 162-164, supplemented by Moore Smith's *Life of John Colborne*, pp. 102-104, and Londonderry's *History of the Peninsular War*, pp. 207-208. These and the French accounts have been compiled into a clear and just narrative by Commandant Balagny, iv. 48-58, with admirable criticism.

The repulse of Lefebvre put an end to further efforts 1808. on the part of Napoleon's cavalry to pass the Esla on Dec. 29. the 29th. Further north, however, Soult had on this same day pushed forward Franceschi with his cavalry to the bridge of Mansilla, which was guarded by three to four thousand of Romana's troops. Moore had advised the Spanish General to destroy the bridge ; but this had not been done ; and the officer in command had made the further blunder of drawing up half of his force on the east bank of the river, at the entrance to Mansilla and to the bridge. Franceschi galloped straight down upon these men, drove them in confusion over the bridge, and, charging in like manner the rest of the Spaniards on the west bank, put the whole to flight with very heavy loss. The fugitives rallied a few miles further west at the bridge of Villarente over the Curueño, and took up a position to defend it ; but Franceschi, emboldened by success, again charged them without hesitation, overthrew them completely, and hunted them almost to the suburbs of Leon. By these two brilliant actions Franceschi opened for Soult the road to Leon ; and Romana, who had retired thither upon Moore's retreat, at once evacuated the city and withdrew to Astorga. Moore on the 18th and 24th had twice begged him to leave the road to Astorga open for the retreat of the British troops ; but the Marquis declared it to be impossible for him to fall back on Asturias owing to the snow.¹ In any case, though it seems hard to blame him for taking refuge with his allies, he led his force exactly in the direction which Moore had desired him to avoid.

Meanwhile the British army was compelled to halt for a day at Benavente, the ammunition and stores having been obliged to change their route and make a longer march than had been intended, owing to the flooded state of the rivers.² On the 27th Hope's and Fraser's divisions marched for Astorga by way of La

¹ Col. Symes to Moore, 25th Dec. 1808.

² Moore Smith's *Life of Colborne*, p. 102.

1808. Bañeza. On the 29th Fraser's division entered Astorga itself, Hope's reached La Bañeza, and Baird's halted at Dec. 30. Acebes. The whole united at Astorga on the 30th, and there came upon the unfortunate rabble which was called Romana's army, naked, starving, ravaged by typhus fever, and utterly demoralised by the defeat of the rear-guard at Mansilla. Moore, it will be remembered, had written on the 24th to Romana that he meant to make a stand at Astorga; and the rumour that such was his intention had filtered down to all ranks of the army. The gate of the mountains of Galicia seemed to be the natural place to hold against an enemy; and there had been accumulated in Astorga very large stores of clothing, camp-equipment, arms, and munitions. The two roads from Astorga to Coruña traverse two passes, that of Manzanal to north and that of Fuencebadon to south; and Romana proposed to Moore that the two armies should combine to defend them, urging in particular the need for protecting his magazines and park of artillery at Ponferrada. He also put forward, after his manner, some extravagant suggestions for taking the offensive.

Moore declined either to advance or to stand. He had not two days' bread to carry his army to Villafranca—thirty-six miles as the crow flies, but little short of fifty as the road runs. His transport, always inadequate, was failing fast, and could not be supplemented, because the inhabitants drove off all their cattle at the approach of the army. The position of Astorga was not really favourable for defence against a superior force; and there was to south of it a road running westward from Benavente to Puebla de Sanabria, by which it could be turned. Such were the reasons alleged by Moore to Romana; and to the present writer at any rate they appear conclusive.¹ It

¹ Mr. Oman (i. 555) thinks, and Commandant Balagny follows him, that with "real energy" provisions might have been brought up from Villafranca, since there was still "a good deal of wheeled transport in the army." The joint force of Moore and Romana

is true that the road by Puebla de Sanabria was so bad, 1808.
so long, and so likely to be impassable owing to the Dec. 30.
snow, that it might have been ignored in a campaign
against any leader except Napoleon; but the man who
had hurried his troops over the Guadarrama during a
hurricane in mid-winter was not likely to shrink from any
effort to gain his end. Yet even if Moore had found
no such arguments to present to Romana, he would
have been equally unwilling to stand and fight, for the
simple reason that (as he put it) a battle was the game
of Bonaparte and not of the British. The Emperor
hoped for nothing so much as to overtake Moore and
compel him to fight; ¹ from which the obvious con-
clusion is that it was Moore's duty to disappoint him.
Moreover, Romana's force, being for combatant purposes
useless, was not only of no profit to Moore but a
positive encumbrance, the more dangerous since it was
a hot-bed of malignant typhus fever. Moore therefore
on the 30th ordered the divisions of Baird, Fraser, and
Hope to pursue the retreat upon Villafranca.

From that moment it seems that discipline in
many battalions ceased altogether. The troops had

must have exceeded thirty thousand men. According to a computa-
tion of Sir Arthur Wellesley, the transport of ten days' bread for
10,000 men required 170 bullock carts (*Wellington Desp.* iv. 57);
so we may say that three days' bread for the army of the allies at
Astorga would have required about as many. Were there 170, or
even 50, at Villafranca? Looking to Baird's reports after he landed,
I cannot believe it. Beyond all doubt, Moore hoped to have found
larger supplies at Astorga, but these were waiting at Villafranca simply
from lack of transport. If the transport of the army at Astorga had
been employed to bring forward these supplies, it would have needed
four days to reach Villafranca, one day to load, and four days to return,
making nine days in all, during which the army would have starved.
Moreover, to assume that the journey would have been accomplished
even in nine days, is to assume that forage for the bullocks would
have been obtainable, which is extremely doubtful. Mr. Oman talks
of Moore's holding Napoleon in check for a week or ten days. The
reader can calculate for himself how many carts would have been
required for the purpose of provisioning the force meanwhile, and how
long they would have needed to bring up the supply.

¹ *Balagny*, iv. 69.

1808. been exasperated in the first instance by finding the
Dec. 30. streets crowded with the men and baggage of Romana's army. This caused tumult and confusion, which, when the order for further retreat was given, rapidly developed into anarchy. It was impossible to make a proper distribution of the stores, many of which, such as clothing and shoes, were badly needed. The men broke away from all control, forcibly entering houses, maltreating the inhabitants, and plundering the magazines ; and the worst characters, hastening, of course, to the barrels of rum, drank themselves into insensibility. Owing to the want of transport it was necessary to make away with such stores as could not be served out ; but the result of the general disorder was that much was destroyed which might profitably have been distributed, and much was spared which had better have been destroyed. The root of all this mischief lay in the fact that certain subordinate Generals, in the plenitude of their ignorance, had made up their own minds, and by loose talk had persuaded their inferiors, that the duty of the Commander-in-chief was to fight and not to retreat.

Meanwhile on the morning of the 30th Napoleon arrived at Castro-Gonzalo from Valderas, to learn that the British had almost certainly quitted Benavente and were falling back upon Astorga. Paget's cavalry had in fact retired on the evening of the 29th and was already at La Bañeza. The Emperor ordered the bridge of Castro-Gonzalo to be repaired at once, and directed Bessières to find fords and pursue the retreating enemy with all his cavalry as vigorously as possible. It was, however, nightfall before the whole of the mounted troops could cross the river, while the leading squadrons were unable to traverse more than half of the distance Dec. 31. to La Bañeza on that day. On the 31st the French infantry entered Benavente, to find nothing but broken-down vehicles, dead horses, and the ashes of the British magazines, which had been effectually destroyed. Napoleon issued two virulent bulletins about the pillage

wrought by the British and their precipitate retreat, 1808. which only revealed his vexation over their escape Dec. 31. from the net that he had spread for them. The French advanced parties, however, had taken many British stragglers, all of whom reported that Moore intended to rally his whole army at Astorga before renewing his retreat ; and the Emperor, therefore, while sending one division—that of Desselles—back to Madrid, hurried the rest forward upon the track of his enemy. He had under his hand at the moment twenty thousand infantry and five thousand cavalry, which, together with Soult's corps, he judged amply sufficient to deal a severe blow to Moore, if he should dare to give battle. Napoleon was heartened by the news that his cavalry had regained contact with the British about La Bañeza on the 31st, and he still hoped that Moore might turn to bay on the eastern slopes of the Galician mountains, in order to give the British convoys time to withdraw through the passes. On 1809. the 1st of January, therefore, he left Benavente for Jan. 1. Astorga. "The weather is bad and the season is severe," he wrote to his brother on that morning, "but that shall not stop us. We shall try to have done with the English." Galloping forward, as was his habit, he was met on the way by a courier bearing despatches from Paris. He read them without a word, remounted his horse, and from that moment rode slowly and silently on, not speaking a word until he reached Astorga.

Here he learned that the British main body had left the town, as we have seen, on the 30th ; that the rear-guard had marched on the 31st, and the last of the cavalry on that very morning. Soult had arrived a short time before the Emperor with one division of infantry ; and his cavalry, under Franceschi, had taken the road by the pass of Fuencebadon, while Colbert's squadrons followed the defile of Manzanal. Napoleon ordered Soult to press the pursuit with the cavalry of Bessières, supported by his own infantry of the

1809. Second Corps and by Ney's of the Sixth Corps ;
Jan. 1. saying that he himself would wait in Astorga for a few days. Had he seen the prospect of great or brilliant results from the further chase of Moore, he would probably have continued to direct it in person ; but his master-stroke had failed. Moreover, he had received not only news of hostile preparations in Austria and of a revolution in Turkey, but very disquieting reports of a conspiracy weaving by those most dangerous and indefatigable
Jan. 2. of intriguers, Talleyrand and Fouché. On the 2nd of January Napoleon issued the final orders rendered necessary by the change in the situation. Colbert's brigade of cavalry was recalled to Villafranca, and placed under the command of Ney, who was directed to remain at Astorga with two divisions of infantry, in order to support Soult if necessary. The Eighth Corps was broken up, and two of its divisions were made over to Soult, who was instructed to continue the pursuit with these, with the divisions of dragoons commanded by La Houssaye and Lorge, and with Franceschi's brigade of Light Cavalry. This gave Soult twenty-five thousand foot and four thousand horse of his own, with sixteen thousand more under Ney at Astorga to help him if need were. These arrangements completed,
Jan. 3. the Emperor on the 3rd returned to Benavente, and, after a few days' stay at Valladolid, hastened back to France.

1808. The main body of Moore's army left Astorga on
Dec. 30. the 30th, the rear-guard following on the 31st. The British, with one important exception, took the road by Manzanal. The light brigades of Craufurd and Alten, however, were ordered by Moore to take the road of Fuencebadon towards Orense and Vigo, in order to cover his left flank. It must be remarked that the advantages of Vigo as a place of re-embarkation had been strongly pressed upon Moore by Baird, so much so that Sir John, though himself in favour of Coruña, would not commit himself to any decision between the two harbours, until he could receive the reports of his own

officers upon them. Craufurd's brigade, therefore, 1809, received orders to push a detachment forward by forced marches to hold the bridge over the Minho, lest the French should seize it before them. This precaution was unnecessary, as it proved, for the column that marched to Vigo was unmolested by the enemy. Romana's Spaniards, who followed them, were indeed overtaken on the 2nd of January by Franceschi's troopers, who made three thousand Spanish prisoners at a trifling cost to themselves; but, after this exploit, Franceschi's brigade was transferred to the Manzanal road, and never left it to the close of the campaign. The two British brigades suffered much hardship from the rough state of the roads, from cold, from snow, and, generally, from the inclemency of the winter. Though they were unpursued, Craufurd never relaxed his vigilance nor neglected precautions for a moment; and it was only by the utmost severity, indeed almost harshness, of discipline that he brought his brigade with relatively slight loss to Vigo. Once arrived there on the 12th of January, the soldiers who had cursed him on the march, blessed the unyielding firmness of the man who had carried them safely through those terrible days of fatigue and exposure.¹

¹ Mr. Oman (i. 564) condemns this diversion of the light brigade to Orense in the following words: "They never saw a Frenchman, embarked unmolested at Vigo, and were absolutely useless to Moore during the rest of the campaign. It is impossible to understand how it came about that they were sent away in this fashion; and nothing can be said in favour of the move. Unless the whole army were going by the Orense route, no one should have been sent along it; and the difficulties of the track were such that to have taken the main body over it would have been practically impossible. As it was, 3500 soldiers were wasted for fighting purposes." Balagny, who appears to have followed Mr. Oman blindly in the latter part of his work, likewise condemns the measure as "une faute grave," adding, quite incorrectly, that Moore was completely ignorant of the nature of the country and had taken no pains to inform himself concerning it.

I have explained that, owing to Baird's representations of the advantages of Vigo as a port of embarkation, Moore was awaiting the reports of his own officers before deciding between that harbour

1808. By this diversion of from three to four thousand Dec. 31. men to a different route, the progress of the main column was made sensibly easier ; but unfortunately the disorder of the army did not upon that account diminish. The entry into the Galician mountains brought with it, as was to be expected on such high ground, increase of suffering. The country was covered with snow ; the roads were a sea of mud ; an icy rain fell in continuous torrents ; and men and horses broke down with fatigue at every step. The first halt of the main body was at Bembibre, which, being the centre of the local trade in wine, contained immense vaults full of liquor. To these hundreds of 1809. men made their way to drink themselves insensible ; Jan. 1. and when on the next day the Reserve, which had now taken up the duty of the rear-guard, and the cavalry marched into the village, they found the very streets strewn with prostrate and inanimate bodies. Edward Paget's soldiers spent the better part of the day in setting these miserable wretches on their legs and driving them forward by means that were not of the gentlest ; but the village was still full of them Jan. 2. when the rear-guard continued its retreat on the 2nd, and Moore was compelled to leave the Twentieth regiment under Colonel Ross, together with a few Hussars, to bring them forward. Later in the day the French cavalry came up in force, and Ross was obliged to fall back, after trying in vain to urge the stragglers on. Scores, if not hundreds of them, still cumbered the streets when the French dragoons rode

and Coruña. Seeing that Moore's object was not to fight, but to retreat, and that his transports had been ordered to go to Vigo, there seems very good reason why, apart from care for the safety of his southern flank, he should have relieved the main army by detaching two brigades on a different road. As General Maurice points out, he had plenty of men with whom to fight Soult, when circumstances obliged him to do so at Coruña. I confess too that it seems to me to be rash, with our imperfect knowledge of the conditions, to lay down the law in so uncompromising a fashion concerning the movements of so exceedingly able a commander.

in, and were cut down in all directions, too much stupefied to resist or even to evade the enemy's sabres. Jan. 2. A few only rejoined the main body, horribly mangled, and were paraded by Moore as a warning to the rest of the army.

On the 1st of January the main body reached Villafranca, where there was a renewal of disorder and insubordination. The town contained fourteen days' biscuit for the whole army, with large quantities of salt meat and rum. The men refused to wait for regular distribution of victuals, plundered the magazines, destroyed quantities of forage, which was sorely needed, broke into the houses in search of drink, and shamefully maltreated the inhabitants.¹ In the midst of the confusion Moore rode up, having left the Reserve at Cacabelos ; and ordered one soldier, who had been taken red-handed in the act of forcing his way into the stores of rum, to be shot in the market-square. But the evil was gone too far to be easily checked. It is noticeable that the troops which were remotest from the enemy were, as a rule, those that behaved the worst, so that it was not excessive hardship that drove them to desperation, but sheer want of control that allowed them to sink into indiscipline. In other words, the officers and the regimental systems of several battalions were grievously at fault.

Where General officers did their duty in earnest, and were supported by their regimental subordinates, order was preserved. While the main body was leaving Villafranca on the 3rd, Edward Paget at Cacabelos Jan. 3.

¹ Mr. Oman in relating these events says that the soldiers broke into the magazines after hearing that Moore had ordered them to be destroyed, "arguing not unnaturally that so much good food should not be burnt," and Commandant Balagny, as usual in his final volume, repeats Mr. Oman. Neither says a word about the troops refusing to wait for the distribution of victuals, of which the Commissaries complained. The conclusion to be drawn from Mr. Oman's pages (though I cannot think that so accomplished a writer can have intended it) is that Moore ordered the magazines to be destroyed without attempting to care for the wants of the troops ; which is absurd.

1809. was reading the Reserve a lecture upon the punishment Jan. 3. meted out by the French dragoons to the stragglers at Bembibre. He had barely ended it, when three men, one from the Artillery, one from the Guards, and one from the Fifty-second, were brought in, having been caught in the act of plundering and ill-treating the villagers. Paget at once formed his battalions into a hollow square, and prepared to hang the culprits on the spot. The ropes were already round their necks, when a hussar galloped up to say that the enemy was close at hand. Paget answered that he did not care if the whole French army were coming ; he would hang the men. At that moment a few distant shots were heard, and an officer of hussars dashed up with a second report to the same effect. Then Paget appealed to the ranks to behave well, if he consented to forgive the three offenders. The men thrice answered " Yes " in chorus ;¹ the square was broken up, and the battalions hastened to their appointed stations.

The scene just described had taken place on the eastern side of the small but flooded stream of the Cua, which is crossed by a stone bridge in the middle of the village of Cacabelos. From the western bank rises a lofty ridge, broken by vineyards and stone walls, which afforded excellent shelter ; and here the Fifty-second, Twentieth, Twenty-eighth, and Ninety-first were drawn up, with one battery of Horse-artillery, facing the bridge. The Ninety-fifth was left on the eastern side of the river ; and five of its companies, together with a squadron of the Fifteenth Hussars, had been pushed eastward to observe the road from Bembibre. A little after noon two regiments of French cavalry came upon this advanced party ; and their leader, General Colbert, noticing the presence of the British Rifles, despatched a

¹ The incident is related in Cadell's *Campaigns of the 28th Regiment*, pp. 47-49 ; Kincaid's *Random Shots from a Rifleman*, pp. 26-29 ; Moorhouse's *History of the Fifty-second*, pp. 96-97. The last-named gives the number of offenders at three, stating their regiments ; Cadell and Kincaid give it at two.

message to Marshal Soult with a request for some infantry. The leading regiment of Merle's division was accordingly sent to him, when the British retired from their position, and Colbert's squadrons pursued their advance, but again halted on observing that the village of Cacabelos was strongly held. Lorge's and La Houssaye's divisions of dragoons presently came up with them ; and for an hour the French stood fast, until Colbert perceived that the five companies of the Ninety-fifth were preparing to withdraw through the village. Judging that the street must presently be blocked, he suddenly bore down at speed upon the squadron of the Fifteenth, which had also turned about to retire. He had judged very shrewdly. The British hussars galloped along the road, carrying away a number of staff officers with them in their rush ; and the two rear companies of Riflemen were obliged to open out in order to let them pass. Very speedily Colbert's troopers came down the street in hot pursuit, and the Riflemen were fairly caught. Two-thirds of them, however, seem to have escaped, while some entered the houses and opened fire upon the French from thence ; but several were killed and forty-eight captured. Emboldened by his success, Colbert tried to carry the bridge by a charge of cavalry, but being met by a blast of grape from the British battery on his front and by a heavy fire of musketry from the battalions in his front and flanks, was driven back with heavy loss.

Moore meanwhile had come upon the scene, and, taking command of the troops, had withdrawn the Twentieth and Fifty-second from the border of the river to the summit of the ridge. Colbert, after his repulse, resolved to await the arrival of the infantry before making a further attack, though he dismounted a certain number of men to hold the approaches to the bridge with their carbines. General La Houssaye also, having found a ford below the village, threw some squadrons across the river, and dismounted his men to engage the British sharpshooters. At four o'clock the

1809. leading battalions of Merle's division came up, and the action became more lively. Colbert, eager to survey the ground over which he hoped to pursue the British, crossed the river and pushed forward with the French skirmishers. In the saddle he offered an easy target, and was shot dead by Rifleman Thomas Plunket, a noted marksman of the Ninety-fifth, thus closing at thirty-two a career of singular promise. At nightfall General Merle deployed his whole division to turn the British right, and Moore drew off his troops slowly and skilfully, having gained the hours that he required for the retreat of the main body. The engagement was not very serious, and resolved itself practically into a duel between the Ninety-fifth and the 4th French Light Infantry; the casualties of the two corps, setting aside the losses of the Rifles from the French cavalry charge, were about the same, not exceeding sixty men.¹

After the action the Reserve fell back to Villafranca, and at ten o'clock continued its retreat, Moore having sent the cavalry on in advance of it to Lugo. At Jan. 4. midnight there was a few hours' halt at Herrerias, when the General received his engineers' reports respecting Ferrol, Vigo, and Coruña. All agreed as to the superiority of Coruña as a place of embarkation; and Moore accordingly sent orders to Baird, Hope, and Fraser that the army should halt at Lugo and assemble there. The Reserve then pursued its march, the road being covered with dead horses, exhausted stragglers, foundered bullocks, and abandoned waggons. The horses of the cavalry broke down by scores, owing to loss of shoes and consequent injury to their feet through long travelling over rocky roads; and, as each animal fell, its rider drew his pistol and, by Lord Paget's order, shot him dead. Most pitiable of all was the sight of the

¹ This account of the action is drawn principally from the narratives in Londonderry, Blakeney, and above all Balagny, iv. 199-206. It is only the new matter brought forward in this last which enables me to add a few details to the narrative of Mr. Oman.

soldiers' wives, who had followed the army on its 1809. march, and who now dropped down on the road, worn Jan. 4. out by the effort to drag themselves and their children forward. However, Paget's soldiers had on this day the good fortune to meet with a Spanish convoy of clothing which, with folly inconceivable in any other administrative body, the Junta of Galicia was sending forward to Romana. The men of the Reserve quickly transferred the animals to their own waggons, and appropriating such shoes and clothing as they wanted, destroyed the rest. The French cavalry on this 4th of January captured over nine hundred British prisoners besides five Spanish guns, which had been abandoned owing to the failure of their teams. The Reserve halted at Nogales, having never been overtaken by the French during the day ; but in the evening the extreme van of La Houssaye's dragoons slept within a mile of the extreme rear of the British, while Merle's division of infantry was less than ten miles astern of them. The French, like the British, had suffered greatly from cold and exhaustion, and had been compelled to leave part of their artillery behind.¹

On the 5th the Reserve marched from Nogales ; and Jan. 5. the French cavalry, somewhat delayed by two unsuccessful attempts to blow up the bridge at Puente Ferreira, on the road a little north-west of Nogales, kept in touch with the British rear-guard all day. At about two o'clock in the afternoon the waggons, containing British treasure to the amount of £25,000, broke down ; and the barrels holding the money were thrown over a precipice and abandoned. La Houssaye's dragoons filled their pockets, but did not on that account relax their pursuit, and late in the evening came up with the British rear-guard at the bridge of Santa Maria de Constantin. A few of the dragoons dismounted to engage the British skirmishers, but only a trifling action followed,² for the

¹ Balagny, iv. 209.

² The British accounts make a more important affair of this, Cadell mentioning in particular that a column of French cavalry

1809. day was too far advanced and the French infantry too far distant for any attempt to force the passage of the bridge. The French cavalry captured two more abandoned guns on this day, but made only one hundred prisoners, a plain proof that those whom they had taken so far were merely the scum of the army.

Jan. 6. A little after midnight the Reserve quietly marched away, and on the following morning found the main body halted in a position five or six miles east of Lugo. Here Moore was greatly annoyed by a vexatious circumstance. Baird, on receiving his orders to halt at Lugo, had, with gross carelessness, entrusted the letters of the same purport for Fraser to an orderly dragoon, who got drunk and lost them. Fraser was a full day's march beyond Lugo when the order at last reached him, and, although he countermarched at once, he brought in his division much weakened by stragglers, and greatly exhausted by two days of arduous work in frightful weather, instead of refreshed by two days' halt. Moore issued a very severe general order, blaming the British officers for the excesses of their men, and appealing to their honour to restore discipline, since an action was imminent. The effect was magical. Stragglers and absent men presented themselves from all sides, and the ranks, lately so thin, became suddenly and mysteriously full. Leith's brigade, which had been left behind by Baird, joined the army between Villafranca and Lugo; and, in spite of all adverse circumstances, Moore found himself in command of nineteen thousand vigorous and confident men.

During the afternoon and evening two divisions of French dragoons and Merle's division of infantry came up, having Mermet's division of infantry not far behind them. Desiring to see what force was before him, Soult brought his artillery forward and opened fire, which was answered by the British. The Marshal then drew

suffered heavily from shrapnel shells. But it seems certain that no French infantry was engaged (Balagny, iv. 212), and Colborne's Journal shows that there were only a few shots fired.

off his troops, having learned what he wished, until the 1809. rest of his force should join him. Moore's position Jan. 6. was exceedingly strong. His right rested on the Minho, which was unfordable ; his front was covered by a ravine and by innumerable enclosures which might serve as natural entrenchments ; and only his left, which leaned upon rugged mountains, could be turned. On the morrow the divisions of Mermet and Delaborde arrived, Jan. 7. though without their artillery ; but Soult's army had been so much weakened by hardship, fatigue, and marauding that the Marshal was still in inferior force. However, in the afternoon he sent Franceschi's brigade with a few companies of light infantry and some horse-artillery to manœuvre about Moore's left, while Merle's division made a vigorous demonstration along his front. There was a brisk skirmish between Sarrut's brigade of this division and Leith's brigade in the British centre, which may have cost each side a hundred men ; but Franceschi's movement on the left had no effect in weakening any part of the British line ; and Soult resolved to defer the attack until the morrow, hoping by that time to be joined by the artillery and by stragglers who had lagged behind. Moore, divining his enemy's purpose, ordered his men to be under arms betimes in the morning.

In the course of the next day the missing men and Jan. 8. the artillery of the French came up, raising Soult's numbers to eighteen thousand men, of which four thousand were cavalry ; but still the Marshal hesitated to attack, though his troops were clamouring for a fight. The two armies spent the whole day in array looking at each other until nightfall ; and then Moore resolved to resume the retreat. He had but one day's bread left in Lugo, and if he took the offensive he would be unable to follow up any success. "A defeat," as Napier well says, "would have been ruin, and victory useless." Sir John issued a final order, warning the men against the dangers of straggling, and intimating that those who were left behind must take their fate ;

1809. and at ten o'clock the various brigades retired to Lugo, Jan. 8. leaving their watch-fires burning. The staff appears to have done its best, by setting up marks and distributing guides, to conduct the various columns through the streets and lanes of the suburbs to the main road to Coruña. But, just as the troops marched off, there rose a storm of rain and sleet so violent that a mounted man could hardly keep his seat in the saddle.¹ This blew away or destroyed the marks, and left the guides in such pitchy darkness that they went hopelessly astray. Several battalions spent the night wandering round and round, to find themselves in the morning still close to Lugo. Only Paget's Reserve, which contrived always to be right when every one else went wrong, struck the main road at the correct point. The wind was full in the faces of the men, who, being drenched to the skin, suffered terribly. By ten o'clock on the morning of Jan. 9. the 9th they could go no further, and the army was halted along the road from Guitiriz to Astariz, which latter place was occupied by the Reserve. In spite of the general confusion, however, the British engineers contrived effectually to destroy the bridge over the Minho about eight miles north of Lugo.²

During the halt there were frequent alarms in the foremost division, without any cause whatever; and the weary men, who were lying on the soaking ground, were repeatedly called to arms for no purpose. Late in the evening the march was resumed, still in terrible weather. In one storm of extreme severity, Baird, who ought to have known better, allowed his whole division to break up and take shelter. The result was that the men could never be collected again. Stragglers became numerous, and marauding parties spread in all directions, plundering the villages and maltreating the peasants, who very rightly revenged themselves with

¹ Neale's *Campaign in Spain*, p. 314.

² Balagny, iv. 227-228, 321. None of the British historians mention the destruction of this bridge, which was the real cause of the delay in the French pursuit.

their knives. The main body, with the honourable exception of the Guards, from this time forward seems to have moved on as a mere disorderly mob, though the Reserve always retained their discipline. In the morning the army reached Betanzos, the Reserve halting a mile or two to east of the town to cover the arrival of hundreds and thousands of stragglers. Fortunately Soult had not discovered the retreat of the British from Lugo until late, nor sent his cavalry forward until nine in the morning of the 9th ; but even so the French dragoons captured five hundred prisoners before they halted for the night.

Finding himself not pressed by the French, Moore granted the army a halt during the 10th, which was sadly needed, for the men had suffered fearfully from exposure. Even mounted officers were so numbed by the cold that they could not stand up when they left their saddles ; and hundreds of the infantry, both officers and men, had dragged themselves painfully to the village, unshod, with feet swollen, frozen, and lacerated by the stones along the road. On the 11th the army marched from Betanzos, headed by the cavalry. It was now refreshed and in better heart, for on reaching the sea the men had left the winter behind them and emerged into a land of spring, where orange and lemon trees abounded, where the rye was in ear and the wild flowers in blossom. Five guns, several thousand muskets, and large quantities of stores and supplies had been amassed in Betanzos for Romana's army, and were now destroyed, though imperfectly ; for the French, when they arrived, found victuals enough to be very acceptable to them. Franceschi's cavalry had been delayed by the destruction of the bridge over the Minho, which was not repaired until noon on the 10th. But this indefatigable officer, having once passed the river, soon regained contact with the retreating British, and captured hundreds of laggards. On the night of the 10th Franceschi's dragoons slept within eleven miles of Betanzos ; and, when they resumed their advance on the morning of

1809. the 11th, Marshal Soult rode in person at their head, Jan. 11. ordering his infantry to follow him with all speed.

A little to east of Betanzos Soult encountered several hundreds of stragglers, some of whom, under the command of a sergeant of the Forty-third, named Newman, made some attempt at resistance, but apparently with small success.¹ These men had been separated from the army by the destruction of the bridges over the Mindo and Mandeo, which meet at Betanzos, and were therefore helpless. Pushing on to the bridges Soult found that the work of demolition was still imperfect, and that one battalion, the Twenty-eighth, was endeavouring to protect the engineers who were at work on one bridge, while Paget's remaining battalions were stationed in support on the hills beyond. The arrival of the French infantry compelled the Twenty-eighth to retire; and Franceschi's brigade, as also the divisions of La Houssaye and Lorge, were able to cross by the half-dismantled bridge in the course of the afternoon, and to advance for a short distance on the road to Coruña.

But on this day, as on every day of the retreat, Soult arrived too late. On the night of the 11th the main body of the British army entered Coruña, under the eyes of Moore, who had ridden forward to see them come in. A sorry sight it must have been to watch the battalions, which had marched with such pride and order to Sahagun, now shoeless and in rags, trailing sulkily towards the sea like a flock of sheep. Yet one brigade caught the General's eye at a distance, for they were marching like soldiers. "Those must be the Guards,"

¹ The accounts of this action of the stragglers seem to have been exaggerated. See Balagny, iv. 473-474. It is, however, certain that Newman received an ensigncy in the First West India Regiment, and a grant of £50 from the Patriotic Fund for his services, which were avouched by his Colonel. It was said that he had formed a rear-guard of men who were unfit to march further, and had thus enabled many who were more able-bodied to rejoin the army. *Historical Records of the 43rd*, pp. 112-113. Cadell assigns the credit to a sergeant of the 52nd.

he said ; and presently the two battalions of the First Guards, each of them still eight hundred strong, strode by in column of sections, with drums beating, the drum-major twirling his staff at their head and the men keeping step, as if in their own barrack-yard. As the remaining battalions went past him Moore addressed every commanding officer, and instructed such as needed the lesson—and these were far too numerous—in their duties when on the march. He can hardly have failed, as we may conjecture, to point out that the senior regiment of the British infantry had set an example to the whole army, and that it was only vicious systems and neglectful officers that had prevented every battalion from behaving as the Guards. However, the goal was now reached, and reached with some prospect of respite ; for, in spite of the many failures in the destruction of bridges during the retreat, the last bridge of all over the Mero at El Burgo had been successfully blown up. In rear of it the Reserve encamped by the village of El Burgo. During twelve days they had covered the retreat under the strong hand of Paget. They had done harder work, they had endured severer marches, and they had undergone greater privations than the rest of the army ; and they had also been frequently engaged in petty actions with the enemy. Yet there were relatively fewer men missing from their ranks than from those of any other division, for, like the Guards, they had faced the high ordeal of the march as disciplined men.

Coruña was reached, but still Moore's troubles were not ended. Contrary winds had detained the transports at Vigo, and it might yet be necessary for him to fight an action before he could embark.¹ He therefore

¹ Soult wrote on the 17th that a fresh fleet of 110 sail came into Coruña on the evening of the 14th, making in all 250 sail. In another letter of the 14th he reported that he saw the British fleet at anchor in Coruña on the 12th, not above 90 or 100 ships. Moore reported on the 13th that the transports had not yet arrived. Both accounts are probably true, the ships in the harbour on the 12th being most likely hospital and store ships. See Balagny, iv. 325-326, 339, 476 n.

1809. ordered the landward front of Coruña to be fortified, and the seaward batteries to be disarmed ; and he also

Jan. 12. embarked on the 12th such numbers of sick and such quantities of stores as could be accommodated. But the respite granted to him was short. The bridge at El Burgo had been destroyed, as we have seen, as also had that at Cambria, a few miles higher up the river ; the officer in charge of the latter operation sacrificing his life in the effort to accomplish the work thoroughly. But there remained a third bridge at Cela, two miles above Cambria, across which on the 12th Franceschi led his brigade,¹ intercepting and capturing a party of sixty British who were returning from Santiago to Coruña. Meanwhile the French infantry came up to the broken bridge of El Burgo, where later in the day it was joined by the horse-artillery of Merle's division, which had waited for low tide to ford the Mindo at Betanzos. A few cannon-shots forced back the British posts before El Burgo ; and Soult at once began the repair of the bridge. It now became more than ever probable that a battle must precede the embarkation ; but Moore was not in the least dismayed. Some of his officers advised him to negotiate for the quiet departure of the army ; but the General would not hear of it, taking, on the contrary, every precaution to ensure that the enemy should gain as little as possible from his withdrawal. Vast quantities of British stores were accumulated in Coruña, the Galician Junta having either no use for them or no means of distributing them. Moore rearmed his troops with the unspoiled muskets,

Jan. 13. and on the morning of the 13th blew up a magazine of four thousand pounds of powder, unfortunately not without serious damage to the town of Coruña. Meanwhile he had withdrawn the Reserve from its advanced situation by the bridge of El Burgo, and drawn up his army at its appointed position for battle.

¹ Mr. Oman says that Franceschi did not discover the bridge till the 13th ; but Napier says that he crossed the river on the 12th, and this is confirmed by Soult's report. Balagny, iv. 325.

On the evening of the 13th the bridge was repaired 1809. sufficiently for a few companies of French infantry to pass it and occupy El Burgo ; but it was not until the following afternoon that it was fit to bear artillery. Jan. 14. Soult then gave his orders for the entire army to cross the river, and detached Franceschi to reconnoitre to southward in order to obtain news of the British force which had marched to Vigo. On the same evening the fleet of transports sailed into Coruña ; and Moore at once began the work of embarkation. The sick, the dismounted cavalry, over fifty guns and nearly one thousand serviceable horses were shipped in the course of the night. Teams for eight British and four Spanish cannon were, however, kept on shore, and large numbers of foundered or disabled animals were destroyed. But the arrival of the transports stimulated Soult also to activity. He had already at hand the infantry-divisions of Merle and Mermet and the cavalry-divisions of Lorge and La Houssaye. Cancelling, therefore, his previous orders to Franceschi, he issued new directions to him and to the rest of his generals for an attack upon the advanced positions of the British on the morrow.

The ground to southward of Coruña rises in a succession of parallel ranges, which run, roughly speaking, from east to west, being bounded on the east by the estuary of El Burgo. The first of these, Monte Mero, lies little more than two miles to south of the town, has an extreme height of over four hundred feet, and declines gradually in altitude from east to west along a front of a mile and a half. Nearly a mile to south of it tower up the heights of Palavea and Peñasquedo, with an average elevation of about six hundred feet. This ridge has a length from east to west of nearly two miles, and is prolonged to north-westward by the Monte de Mesoiro. Monte Mero and the heights of Peñasquedo alike were covered with rocks and large patches of gorse, making the ground both difficult and blind. On the western side the two ranges are connected by a low neck, little more than one hundred

1809. and fifty feet high, where stands the village of Elviña.
Jan. 14. This is a cluster of scattered houses, each surrounded by its garden and wall of dry stone ; the whole forming a labyrinth of narrow ways. In the neighbourhood of Elviña rise two small streams, one of which runs south-eastward towards the village of Palavea, whose name it bears, and then turning slightly to northward discharges itself into the estuary of El Burgo. The other, the Monelos, having its source north-west of Elviña, pursues a northerly direction, its valley separating Monte Mero from three distinct hills upon the western side, namely, the heights of Monte Mesoiro to south-west, of San Cristobal to west, and of Santa Margarita—a gentle eminence not exceeding fifty feet in elevation—to north-west. The valleys of both streams embrace some extent of level ground, which is cultivated, and broken by innumerable little enclosures of loose stone walls. The main road from Madrid to Coruña, after crossing the Rio Mero at El Burgo, passes north-westward from it through the villages of Portazgo, Palavea, and Piedralonga, turning northward by the last-named to ascend the eastern end of Monte Mero, and, descending its northern slope by the village of Eiris, to run once more north-westward by the village of Oza into Coruña.

The most advantageous position for Moore would have been the heights of Peñasquedo, but, this being too extensive for his numbers, he fell back upon Monte Mero. Here his left flank was protected by the estuary, though on the right the ground was open and easy for a turning movement, which if successful would cut him off from the port of Coruña. The superior elevation of the ridge of Peñasquedo also gave an enemy, which occupied it, the advantage of commanding Monte Mero by the fire of artillery, though at rather long range. None the less Monte Mero, with all these drawbacks, was the only possible position for Moore ; and he could but seek to make the best of it by skilful dispositions. His first line from Elviña to the estuary, along the slopes of Monte Mero, consisted of the divisions of Hope and

Baird, each with two brigades in line and one in support. 1809. Of Baird's division, Bentinck's brigade rested its right ^{Jan. 14.} on Elviña, and extended from thence eastward, where the line was continued by Manningham's brigade, with the Guards under Warde in rear. Leftward from Manningham's brigade the array was prolonged by the brigade of Leith, which was deployed on the west of the road to Coruña, and by that of Hill, which was stationed between that road and the estuary. Catlin Craufurd's brigade, concealed in rear of Hill's between Eiris and the tidal water, completed the distribution of Hope's division. But Moore's weak point, as he well knew, was his right flank. For the protection of this, therefore, Paget's Reserve was massed further northward about the village of Oza, to the right rear of Baird, and Fraser's division was drawn up still further to the right rear on the heights of Santa Margarita. Of the nine guns which constituted the British artillery, six were on the heights of Monte Mero, and the remainder with Paget's Reserve.

Such were Moore's dispositions for a battle in case ^{Jan. 15.} one should be forced upon him; but meanwhile his advanced parties were pushed forward to the heights of Palavea. It was these that Soult desired to thrust back on the 15th. Accordingly on the morning of that day he ordered the infantry of Merle and Mermet, supported by Lorge's and La Houssaye's dragoons, to advance and seize the heights above named; and very soon three companies of Voltigeurs, which formed Merle's advanced guard, opened a sharp skirmish with the picquets of the British Fifth Foot. The Fifth disputed the ground stubbornly, but the French brought their horse-artillery into action, and forced their opponents steadily back upon Piedralonga. Here Colonel Mackenzie brought up additional companies of the Fifth and made a counter-attack, hoping to seize the French guns, but was surprised by a sharp fire from skirmishers concealed behind a wall. Mackenzie himself was killed, and his men were driven back with

1809. considerable loss. Meanwhile Mermet's division, Jan. 15. passing to the left of Merle's, had likewise thrust back the British posts on the heights of Peñasquedo. Soult then occupied the entire ridge. The skirmishing had cost each side about one hundred killed and wounded, the loss of the British if anything exceeding that of the French. In the course of the afternoon Delaborde's division came up, whereupon the Marshal definitely repeated his orders to Franceschi to march to Santiago and explore the country in that quarter. Lastly, with a view to an attack on the morrow, he directed twelve heavy guns to be brought up on the heights of Peñasquedo opposite Elviña.

Jan. 16. The morning of the 16th broke sunny and cloudless. Soult from the summit of his position could see the scarlet lines on Monte Mero solid and motionless, and beyond them the low swell of Santa Margarita, the white houses of Coruña, and the masts of the British fleet. Catlin Craufurd's brigade was absolutely hidden from him, and the divisions of Paget and Fraser were indistinct, even if they were visible at all. He could therefore only guess vaguely at the numbers of his enemy; while on the other hand the strength of his own force could be exactly estimated, as it descended from the heights to the attack. Soult's army counted close upon twelve thousand infantry, rather more than three thousand cavalry, and somewhat over nine hundred artillery, or something over sixteen thousand men in all; ¹ but his superiority in cavalry was of little profit

¹ The numbers given by Balagny are:—

Infantry, 579 officers ;	11,349 men	11,928
Cavalry, of all ranks	3,298	
Artillery , , , ,	930	16,156

Infantry. Mermet's division, 31st Light (4), 47th (4), 122nd of Line (4). 12 battalions.

Merle's division, 2nd (3) and 4th (4) Light, 15th (3), 36th Line (3). 13 battalions.

Delaborde's division, 15th Light (3), 70th (4), and 86th Line (3). 10 battalions.

on ground so much broken by gorse, rocks, and stone 1809. walls. However, he drew up his army in the following Jan. 16. order. On his left, on the heights of Peñasquedo, stood Mermet's division of twelve battalions, resting its left flank on a pine-wood. To the south-east of this pine-wood was a battery of ten guns posted at a range of a thousand to eleven hundred yards from the British right at Elviña. In the centre stood Merle's division of thirteen battalions, in two lines, on the heights above Palavea. Delaborde's division, though not yet in position, was to form to the right of Merle about Portazgo. Of the cavalry, two regiments of Lorge's division were a little to south of Portazgo ; the remaining two having been detached to the heights of Perillo, on the eastern side of the estuary of El Burgo, to prevent a possible disembarkation in that quarter. La Houssaye's division was formed to the left of Mermet's, and somewhat in advance of it, towards the heights of San Cristobal. It was evidently Soult's intention to hold the British front with the divisions of Delaborde and Merle, and to turn their right with those of Mermet and La Houssaye.

Nevertheless all through the morning of the 16th the two armies watched each other without moving. The French regiments had for two days been awaiting the order to attack, and were keenly impatient ; but still Soult hesitated. Possibly he suspected that the British were superior in numbers, which to all intent they were, for, though their actual total was slightly lower than that of the French, they had fifteen thousand infantry in line against twelve thousand of the enemy.

Cavalry. Lorge's division, 13th, 15th, 22nd, 25th Dragoons.

La Houssaye's division, 17th, 18th, 19th, 27th Dragoons.

Artillery. Twenty guns in action (Balagny, iv. 248-250).

I have followed Balagny in preference to Mr. Oman in the above list, his sources of information being naturally the better. Balagny shows that the Swiss regiments included in Mr. Oman's list had been detached and were not present at the action. Balagny is the first to prove that Franceschi's brigade was also absent from Coruña.

1809. At about a quarter to two o'clock in the afternoon Jan. 16. Moore said to his military secretary, "Now, if there is no bungling, I hope we shall get away in a few hours."¹ Ten minutes later Hope rode up to him with the news that the French were advancing in great force. Soult had in fact given the order to attack. Mermet was to carry Elviña and turn the British right; Merle was to second him by falling upon their centre; and, far away on the British left, Delaborde was to take Piedralonga. At about two o'clock Mermet's division was in motion, and five hundred Voltigeurs swarmed forward to the assault of Elviña. At their head was General Jardon, a crabbed, foul-mouthed, hard-drinking old soldier, who talked the French of the canteen and could hardly write his name. Though a General, he never encumbered himself with aide-de-camp, servant, horses, or baggage, but marched on foot with the advanced guard, and borrowed a shirt from a soldier's knapsack on the rare occasions when he changed his linen. In action he carried a musket among the foremost of the skirmishers, and, so long as he could burn powder, was perfectly happy. Such was the "Voltigeur General," brave as a lion and a born fighting man, who led the way to Elviña.²

On the British side Bentinck's brigade was ready for them, the Fourth being on the right, the Fiftieth in the centre, on the ridge just above the village, and the Forty-second on the left. Jardon's men advanced rapidly, gradually driving the picquets of the Fourth and the Fiftieth from Elviña, while the French battery on the heights of Peñasquedo opened a raking fire upon the stationary ranks of the brigade. The main body of Mermet's division then came running down the hill, with loud shouts; and a murmur passed along Bentinck's battalions, "Where is the General?" Presently Moore

¹ Moore Smith's *Life of John Colborne*, p. 100.

² *Journal du Général Fantin des Odoards*, pp. 218-219. Jardon was killed next year by a Portuguese peasant in one of the skirmishes during Soult's advance through northern Portugal.

galloped up at the top of his speed, watched the advancing columns of the French for a few moments, Jan. 16. hurried away to the left, and presently returned again to give Napier permission to reinforce the skirmishers of the Fiftieth and open the British counter-attack. The French 31st and 47th now came up in dense columns, and the 47th, skirting Elviña by the west, began to deploy on the right flank of the Fourth. Moore sent orders to Paget to bring forward his division, so as to parry this stroke, and meanwhile directed the Fourth to throw back its right wing at right angles to its front, a movement which was executed with such precision as to earn the General's warm approval. The 31st meanwhile, on coming before Elviña, parted into two columns, the left of which went through the village, while the right, rounding its eastern side, advanced up the hill against the Forty-second.

The Highlanders and the Fiftieth had so far been engaged in a confused fight with the swarming skirmishers of Mermet, both sides taking advantage of the shelter of the enclosures. The time was now coming for sterner combat, and, Baird having been disabled by a cannon shot, Moore was on the spot to direct it. The right column of the French 31st halted to deploy, and Moore seized the moment to order the Forty-second to advance.¹ The Highlanders strode forward, poured in one volley, and charged with the bayonet. There was a short but desperate conflict between the two regiments, and then the French gave way and ran down to the foot of the hill, cruelly maltreated, while the Highlanders halted behind a wall. Shortly afterwards the left-hand column

¹ This is the account of Colonel Stirling, who commanded the Forty-second in the action. The journal of Colonel Graham, however, says that Baird gave the order, and gave it rather too soon; and Hook's *Life of Sir David Baird* says that Baird gave the word of command at Moore's request. In this case Baird cannot have been wounded until later, but it should seem that both he and Moore were struck, Baird the first, within a few minutes of each other.

1809. of the 31st emerged from Elviña, was caught likewise Jan. 16. in the act of deployment by the Fiftieth, and driven back in confusion into the village. The French, taking advantage of the lanes and houses, fought furiously, but were hustled out of Elviña, abandoning many killed and wounded, and very nearly leaving their eagle behind them. A detachment of Voltigeurs, who had barricaded themselves into the church, was surrounded and taken. So far the British counter-attack had succeeded brilliantly.

Napier now pressed on beyond the village, and began to rally his men to carry the offensive movement still further. Moore had ordered the Fiftieth to be supported, but Bentinck, on the contrary, recalled such men of the regiment as were in the village, leaving the commanding officer with but a handful of soldiers on the south side, in the face of Mermet's reserve. This reserve, with the rallied men of the 31st, was now sent forward, and, catching the Fiftieth while still scattered, drove it back with heavy loss. Napier himself was wounded and taken, Major Stanhope was killed, several men were captured, and the French regained possession of Elviña. Another mishap followed shortly afterwards. Moore had brought forward the two battalions of Guards to take the place of the Fiftieth and Forty-second ; but there was as yet no news from Paget, and there was a vague report that the French had pushed a column round the British right in the direction of San Cristobal. The light was beginning to fail, and the smoke hung so thickly over the valley of the Monelos that nothing could be seen in that quarter. Apprehensive for the safety of his right flank, Moore resolved to make a diversion by a counter-attack on the French centre, and with this object ordered a battalion of Guards to advance. Owing to clumsy handling, the progress of the battalion was slow, but its forward movement was no sooner observed by the Forty-second than they began to retire, under the impression that the Guards were coming to relieve them. Moore was

obliged to check their retreat in person, when the 1809. Highlanders returned to their former position at once. Jan. 16. But the direction of the various movements about Elviña obliged the General, and indeed the superior officers at large, to be constantly returning to the cross-roads at the north-western angle of the village, and the fact was not unobserved by the gunners of the French battery on the heights of Peñasquedo. Hence it came about that, after Moore had rallied the Highlanders, he was struck by a round shot on the left breast and shoulder. The shock hurled him from his horse. He fell at the feet of Graham's charger, but raised himself into a sitting position with his uninjured arm, and continued to follow with his eyes the return of the Forty-second into action. So strong was his speech, so perfectly unaltered his features, that Graham could not believe him to be wounded until he saw that the General's arm had been almost severed from his body. He was placed under cover of a bank, and presently, with his own consent, carried to the rear; while Graham galloped off to inform Hope that the command had devolved upon him.¹

The fall of Moore left the British right for a time without a commander. The counter-attack against the centre never took place; and the French, having driven the Fiftieth from Elviña, pursued their advantage until checked by a battalion of Guards, which forced them back into the village. A sharp fire was kept up until dusk, but it seems that a part of the village at any rate remained in the hands of the French to the end. This, however, was a small matter, for they did not dare to move from it. The truth is that in this quarter of the field both sides had had more than enough. The losses of both had been very severe, and

¹ Delavoye's *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, pp. 297-298. This passage from Graham's diary, which appears to have been overlooked by Commandant Balagny and Mr. Oman, explains, in my judgment, much that is obscure about the movements of the Forty-second and Guards.

1809. the survivors thought more of keeping themselves
 Jan. 16. under cover than of fighting. In spite of much firing,
 therefore, the battle about Elviña came practically to a
 standstill ; and, as night fell, both parties, as if by
 mutual consent, retired from before the village which
 had been the scene of so desperate a conflict.¹

To return now to the extreme right flank of the British, it will be remembered that the Fourth Foot had been obliged to change front in order to meet the enveloping attack of the four battalions of the French 47th. The Fourth, protected by a garden-wall and a deep hollow way, stood manfully until Paget's division came hurrying up to relieve them ; the Ninety-first and Twentieth advancing along the slope on the right bank of the Monelos, while the Fifty-second and Rifles, with the Twenty-eighth in support, moved along the valley, full upon the left flank of the 47th. The French were obliged to change front and retire fighting, considerably harassed by the fire of the Rifles on their extreme left. Two regiments of La Houssaye's dragoons twice attempted to check the Riflemen by a charge, but failed owing to the difficulties of the ground ; and La Houssaye very wisely dismounted one regiment for the support of the 47th, in case Paget should carry his enveloping movement still further and threaten the French batteries on the hill of Peñasquedo. How far Paget pushed his advantage is doubtful. It has been asserted that the Ninety-fifth actually made a dash at the French guns, and was only checked by the arrival of two battalions of the French reserve.² The French also admit that the British gained ground in

¹ Balagny, iv. 256, 492-497 ; Fantin des Odoards, p. 200 ; Moore Smith's *Life of John Colborne*, p. 391. Commandant Balagny justly lays stress upon the fact that the French held Elviña, but admits that both sides were exhausted, and, with his usual impartiality, quotes Fantin des Odoards against his own contention. Whether the French held Elviña to the end or not, they were evidently as glad to be quit of it as were the British when night fell ; and the fact is no dishonour to either side.

² In Cope's *History of the Rifle Brigade*, a doubtful authority.

this quarter. But it is uncertain whether there was 1809. light for the attack to be pushed so far as to the battery Jan. 16. itself; and it is more probable that the French, having brought forward all their reserves, were still in position at the head of the valley of the Monelos when the action came to an end. The Rifles, however, captured over one hundred and fifty prisoners.¹

In the centre Merle sent down three brigades to the foot of the heights to support Mermet's attack upon Elviña, and, at the moment when the Forty-second made its counter-attack, detached the four battalions of the 4th Light to fall upon the Highlanders. On their way, however, the 4th were themselves attacked in flank by Manningham's brigade, whereupon Merle turned them straight against their opponents on Monte Mero. A furious combat ensued which lasted for two hours, at the end of which, as at Elviña, both sides had had enough. The British Eighty-first, which had suffered very severely, was replaced by the Fifty-ninth; and Merle, reinforcing the exhausted 4th Light by two battalions of the 2nd Light, sent a third battalion to engage the remainder of Leith's brigade. Here again the contest was ended by darkness. The French claim to have gained a little ground; but neither side had obtained any real advantage.

On the extreme left of the British, Delaborde's infantry did not come into action until late in the afternoon, when General Foy attacked Piedralonga with four companies and drove out the picquets of the British Fourteenth. Three companies of the Fourteenth and two of the Ninety-second then came down and expelled the French in their turn, taking a few prisoners. Foy then brought up another battalion, and recovered the southern end of the village, while the Fourteenth still held its northern extremity; and so matters remained until night set a close to the action.

The fire, which had everywhere slackened after five

¹ Balagny throws doubt upon this (iv. 262 n.); but Cope in the *History of the Rifle Brigade* is very precise as to the numbers.

1809. o'clock, ceased entirely at six, leaving both sides at the Jan 16. end very much as they had been at the beginning of the fight. The casualties of English and French appear to have been about equal. The French lost rather over six hundred killed and wounded, of whom three hundred and ninety-six belonged to Mermet's division, and between one and two hundred prisoners, or say nine hundred in all. The 31st Light alone lost three hundred and thirty killed, wounded, and taken. The losses of the British were never actually ascertained, but were set down by Hope at eight or nine hundred men. The heaviest losses fell upon Bentinck's and Manningham's brigades, and among them upon the Fiftieth, Forty-second, and Eighty-first. The Fiftieth lost five officers and one hundred and eighty men; the Forty-second six officers and one hundred and forty men,¹ and the Eighty-first eleven officers and one hundred and thirty-nine men, killed and wounded. These regiments, and in particular the two first, suffered terribly from the fire of the great French battery, to which the British guns could make no reply. It needed Moore's presence to keep the men steady under so hard a trial, which accounts for the fact that he never left them for long. The casualties for the remaining divisions were slight, and often trifling. Of Hope's division only the Fourteenth and Fifty-ninth were seriously engaged. Paget's two leading battalions did not lose a hundred men; while Catlin Craufurd's brigade and Fraser's division never fired a shot. In the French army also several battalions of Merle's division, and nearly the whole of Delaborde's, took no part in the battle. The losses were therefore relatively heavy upon both sides, and the action very honourable to the troops of both nations that took part in it. But it would be absurd to say that either side gained a great victory.

Nevertheless there was a depression upon the French

¹ Cannon's *History of the Forty-second* states the numbers at 6 officers and 203 men.

side, after the firing ceased, which was not to be found among the British. This was in some degree natural, for the French had been the aggressors, and, having gained no advantage, may be said to have failed. But there was something more than this. In his report of the battle to Berthier, Soult declared that he had only intended to make a reconnaissance in force, in order to thrust back the British and oblige them to show their strength. But a General does not drag ten heavy guns with enormous difficulty to the top of a steep hill for the sake of a reconnaissance in force ; and Soult's long hesitation on the morning of the 16th points to the probability that, had he not been despatched in pursuit of the British by Napoleon's urgent orders, he would not have engaged them at all until he had been reinforced, and would very likely have allowed them to embark with little molestation. As it was, he threw his troops into action piecemeal, attacking briskly on his left, but with less and less energy along the rest of his line, until on the extreme right Delaborde's movement amounted to little more than a demonstration. The result was naturally failure ; and his despatch on the night of the battle shows that he felt it to be such. He even expressed some apprehension lest the British should attack him, and declared that he should not resume the offensive until reinforced by troops exceeding in number a division of infantry. Most likely he underrated his enemy, and was proportionately dismayed at the stubbornness with which his attack had been repelled. It is very evident that he did not look upon himself as victorious, and Mermet's division, at any rate, shared his opinion. Probably, as had been the case also with the French soldiers in Egypt, Soult's troops had never before endured a really severe fire of musketry ; and this novel experience inspired them with respect for their enemy.¹

The British, on the other hand, were encouraged and emboldened. They had longed for a fight to show

¹ *Fantin des Odoards*, pp. 201, 203.

1809. their mettle before they embarked, and they felt that Jan. 16. they had acquitted themselves with credit. In three different instances their peculiar tactics had resulted in the discomfiture of their enemy ; and they were satisfied that they could still beat the French. Their heaviest trial had been the long exposure to the fire of the French battery, which they had no means to silence. Many British officers thought that, if the fight had opened earlier and Moore had not been struck down, Paget's counter-offensive movement would have resulted in the envelopment of Soult's right wing and the capture of all his guns. Such speculations are of little profit ; but it may be fairly said that such a result was possible, and the more so since Moore was an abler commander in battle than Soult. Hope, however, wisely decided to pursue the object for which the battle had been fought, a safe re-embarkation.

Meanwhile Moore had been carried off the field by a party of Guards and Highlanders, attended by Captain Hardinge, the future Lord Hardinge and Commander-in-chief. As they lifted him into a blanket, his sword became entangled in the wound, but he refused to have it removed. So perfect was his composure that Hardinge spoke hopefully of his recovery, but was answered, " No, I feel that to be impossible." The General then dismissed Hardinge to his duty, and presently met two surgeons, who had been dressing Baird's shattered arm and had been ordered by Sir David to leave him and attend to the Commander-in-chief. Moore dismissed them also, bidding them give their care to the soldiers. He was carried to his headquarters at Coruña, frequently bidding the bearers halt that he might watch the fight, and was there laid down on a mattress. Then was seen the terrible nature of his hurts. The shoulder and collar-bone were shattered to fragments ; the arm was nearly severed ; two ribs were broken ; and the muscles of the breast were torn and knotted into ghastly strips. His anguish as the wound grew cold

became extreme ; but not the powers of pain could prevail against that indomitable spirit. Colonel Jan. Anderson, one of his oldest friends, supported his head ; and to him Moore spoke from time to time, hoarsely and with difficulty, for the blow of the shot had injured his lungs. As his staff came in, one by one, he addressed each of them calmly and quietly, to ask how the day was going, and expressed his contentment that the French were repulsed. “ I hope,” he added, “ that the people of England will be satisfied. I hope my country will do me justice.” Once only his calmness forsook him, when he spoke of his mother ; but he recovered himself, and when Colborne came into the room, enjoined it upon Anderson to recommend that officer for promotion. He asked if all his aide-de-camps were safe ; and Anderson, raising his hand to impose silence on his companions, answered that all were well. The words were untrue, but they were merciful. Though Burrard had been appointed to supersede Moore, and Moore in his turn to supersede Burrard, the outcome of these violent changes had been not jealousy but warm friendship between the two men. So, when they parted at Lisbon, Moore had taken Burrard’s son as his aide-de-camp ; and Ensign Harry Burrard of the First Guards, a most promising young officer, had, like his chief, been stricken to the death. The shock of this distress was spared to the dying General. He continued to speak. “ Is Paget in the room ? Remember me to him—he is a fine fellow. . . . I feel myself so strong—I fear I shall be long dying—it is great uneasiness—it is great pain.” Two more of his aide-de-camps, Stanhope and Percy, then entered the room. He greeted both with a kind word ; but there were yet two whom he had not seen, George Napier ¹ and Burrard, and once again he asked if all of his aide-de-camps were well. For the second time Anderson raised his hand and suppressed the truth which he had not courage to utter. There

¹ George Napier came in just after Moore had expired.

1809. followed yet a few kindly messages, and then the last Jan. silence, as John Moore passed unyielding from the tyranny of pain to the gentle dominion of death. Those who watched him could perceive no change in his features, "no distorted countenance, no sign of anguish ; the picture of the mind could be traced by the serenity of the face, the one calm and dignified as the other was pure and heroic."¹

Meanwhile Hope, after debating the difficult question whether to wait for another day and attack or be attacked, had decided to embark the army, and had ridden into Coruña to consult the naval officers. At nine o'clock the troops were withdrawn from Monte Mero, leaving only the picquets behind to feed the watch-fires ; and the embarkation went forward rapidly and without confusion through the night. At Jan. 17. daybreak the picquets were withdrawn and shipped under the protection of Hill's brigade, which was posted near the ramparts ; and soon afterwards the French, discovering that the position had been evacuated, pushed forward some battalions to the heights of Santa Margarita. As they advanced, about eight o'clock in the morning, they fired a few random shots, which will be remembered as long as the English language lasts. For at that moment there stood in the landward bastion of the citadel a small working party of the Ninth Foot, a chaplain, Mr. Symons, and a group of four officers, Anderson, Colborne, Stanhope, and Percy, carrying the corpse of Moore. Before them was a newly-dug grave ; hard by was the mound of another, covering the body of General Anstruther, who had died of dysentery a few days before. The firing caused the ceremony to be hurried ; and not without reason, for by noon the French had brought six guns to the heights above the southern end of the bay, and opened fire upon the transports within range.² Several

¹ Letter of Colborne, in Moore Smith's *Life of John Colborne*, pp. 108-109 ; Delavoye's *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, pp. 298-299.

² Balagny and others state that it was the fire of these guns

of the masters took fright, cut their cables, and stood 1809. out to sea ; and one store-ship was actually deserted by every soul of the crew, who carried off the compass with them. Four vessels ran on shore, three of which could not be refloated ; but, as usual, the blue-jackets were equal to all emergencies, bringing off the men from the stranded ships and manning the derelict. Hill's brigade then embarked, and the fleet put to sea by Baird's order, rather prematurely, before many of the officers had been transhipped to their own battalions.¹ Finally Beresford's rear-guard embarked on the 18th, Jan 18. the Spaniards faithfully holding the citadel for their protection. The last troops to embark were a company of the Ninth, and the last man was Captain William Gomm, later a Field-Marshal, who survived until 1875.

A south-westerly gale drove the transports home in four or five days ; and it is said that some officers, worn out with the exertions of the previous three weeks, fell asleep when the ships weighed anchor and never woke till they reached Portsmouth. All ranks landed as they had embarked, in the clothes which they had never changed for three weeks, unwashed, unshorn, unspeakably filthy.² The people at the various ports were horrified at their appearance. They were accustomed only to "the daintiness of parade," and they now saw for the first time something of the grim realities of war. They vented their compassion in denunciations of the Ministry or of the General, according to their political prejudices ; and a controversy arose over the conduct of Moore, which has continued, after the lapse of a century, until the present day.

At first sight the campaign seemed to the British

that hastened the funeral, but there was an interval of some hours between the funeral, which took place at eight o'clock, and the fire opened on the transports, which was not until noon.

¹ Moore Smith's *Life of John Colborne*, p. 393.

² *Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith*, i. 17, 159.

1809. nation to be simply a story of disaster ; and impartial judges¹ of the present time have refused to look upon it in any other light. A large British force, the largest indeed that had ever crossed the sea to act as a single army, had been sent to Spain to aid the Spanish nation in expelling the French. So far from succeeding in this object, it had been compelled to fly to its ships, and to re-embark with a loss of from five to six thousand men. The troops had indeed redeemed their honour by repelling the French before Coruña, and the Commander-in-chief had atoned for his faults, if of faults he had been guilty, by his death upon the battle-field. But there was no gainsaying the plain fact that the British had been driven from Spain with humiliation, if not with disgrace, and could show no apparent profit which could be set against the expenditure of one-sixth of their numbers.

The question then arises, Was any military or political advantage gained by Moore's raid upon Napoleon's communications ? The latest of the French critics denies it. This perilous diversion, in his opinion, rendered no real service to Spain, because her hosts were already destroyed and Madrid was already conquered. No Spanish force existed except the fragments of vanquished armies under Galluzzo at Almaraz, and under Infantado at Cuenca. These were not relieved by the departure of the French army from Madrid ; on the contrary they were still watched by Lefebvre and Victor, and presently met with their fate at Almaraz and Ucles. The capital meanwhile was so strongly held that insurrection was impossible. The operations of the British army had consequently no influence on the southern provinces, nor on the armies which were being re-formed there. Moore, therefore, by drawing immediately upon himself all the weight of a powerful army, risked the safety of his force without possibility of compensatory advantage.²

¹ Most notably the late Lord Acton.

² Balagny, iii. 651-652.

British military critics, on the other hand, maintain, 1809. as did Castlereagh at the time in the House of Commons, that Moore's march upon Sahagun deranged the whole of Napoleon's plans. One of them indeed goes so far as to describe it as "the boldest, the most successful, the most brilliant stroke of war of all time."¹

The truth must lie somewhere between these two extremes. Incontestable facts suffice, I think, to show that Moore's operations produced very considerable results ; and it is no exaggeration to say that they changed the whole course of history. After defeating and dispersing all the Spanish armies, Napoleon was about to strike two blows which, if they had fallen true, must greatly have strengthened his hold upon the Peninsula. One large section of his force was on the point of besieging Zaragoza ; another was on the eve of entering Portugal, where it must infallibly have mastered Lisbon and deprived the British of their most valuable base of operations. In both instances Moore's advance arrested the Emperor's hand. Moncey's corps was withdrawn from before Zaragoza for a few days, a short respite indeed, but sufficient to hearten the garrison to the most memorable defence in the history of war. From the valley of the Tagus the main army, which was advancing upon Lisbon, was suddenly diverted to the north-west ; and from seventy to eighty thousand French soldiers were urged forward with desperate haste and cruel hardship for the single purpose of destroying the British army. The great movement failed. Soult's forty-five thousand men were drawn into the Galician mountains to no purpose ; and the losses of the French army, in its first attempt to intercept Moore and its subsequent pursuit to Coruña, can hardly have fallen below those of the British. The British army escaped, not indeed without casualties as severe as it would have suffered in a great general action ; but it might perfectly well have sailed round to Cadiz, had

¹ General Maurice in *Diary of Sir John Moore*.

1809. the Spanish authorities been disposed to admit it, to resume the contest in that quarter. Moore's first intention had been to take it to Vigo from Coruña, in order to set it in order under the protection of that fortress ; and his letters show that he decided to bring it to England only because that was the quicker method of re-equipping it. As shall before long be seen, a British army returned within three months to Portugal, before Soult had been able to move south of the Douro, and in good time to drive him out of the country. So much, therefore, was certainly achieved ; and, since a French advance upon the south of Spain would assuredly have followed immediately upon the occupation of Lisbon, it seems to me that Moore's diversion most decidedly made itself felt in the southern provinces. When it is added that the French army was unable to approach Lisbon in force until 1810, that it was then obliged to fall back, and that in fact it never succeeded in mastering Lisbon at all, there can, I think, be no doubt as to the reality of Moore's good service.

But even taking the contemporary view, that the campaign of Coruña was a disaster, there arises the further question whether the chief burden of responsibility attaches to the Government or to the General. There can, I think, be no doubt that Castlereagh spared neither care nor exertion to second Moore to the best of his ability, and supported him most loyally from first to last. He failed, however, in two points. In the first place he neglected to furnish him at the outset of the campaign with coined silver money. There was much excuse for this omission, which, moreover, was made good as speedily as possible ; for the Government was terribly embarrassed by the dearth of specie, and hoped that Moore would be able to raise money from Treasury bills on the spot. In the second place, Castlereagh's instructions for the conduct of the campaign were based upon an utterly false conception of the true state of affairs in Spain. He trusted that the wants of the British army in respect of transport

and supply would be made good by the Spanish Government ; but practically there was no Spanish Government. He ordered Moore to concert operations with the Spanish military authorities ; and there was no Spanish Commander-in-chief. He expected Moore to fight by the side of the Spanish armies ; and, before Moore could take the field, there were no Spanish armies. The result was that Moore found himself isolated in Spain two hundred miles from his base, and confronted by French armies of six or seven times his own strength. Could Ministers have foreseen this ? It is, I think, hard to say that they could. They had not yet learned the meaning of Spanish *jactancia* ; and, after all, the Spaniards had captured Dupont's army at Baylen and driven the French host, which had advanced as far south as Cordova, to take refuge behind the Ebro. Could Ministers have set the army at Lisbon in motion earlier ? That is a question which could only be answered by recapitulation of the unhappy events which followed after Vimeiro. It must, however, be remarked, as an important detail, that Baird's cavalry did not reach Coruña until a full month after his infantry. It is difficult to say whether or not Castle-reagh should be blamed for the dearth of horse-transport, which were extremely costly ; though it is certain that the delay was especially unfortunate. Upon the whole, therefore, though Ministers were certainly guilty of grave blunders, there is very much to be said in their defence. They were misled by their own agents, and, above all, by the ruling authorities in Spain ; and, to do them justice, they took the blame upon themselves, without a thought of visiting it upon their allies.

At the same time it would be unreasonable to bear too hardly upon the shortcomings either of the Central or the local Juntas. It is too much to require of a nation, king-ridden and priest-ridden for generations, that it should exhibit suddenly great gifts of self-government and administration ; and the strong

1809. provincial spirit throughout the country enormously increased the difficulties and limited the powers of the Central Junta. It does, of course, seem monstrous that the Galician Junta should have refused permission to Baird to land at Coruña ; but the Galician Junta was after all only a committee of Spanish Squire Westerns ; and we can imagine that even a committee of British Squire Westerns, in similar circumstances, might have hesitated to welcome a large foreign force at such a port as Plymouth. It is significant that no Spanish troops had any great success in the field until they grouped themselves into guerilla bands under leaders of their own choice, each of whom followed his own plan of operations, and did what was right in his own eyes. Even a Napoleon would have needed more time to rise to supreme power in Spain than in any other country of Europe.

It remains to examine into Moore's action, to enquire how far he did what was best to be done, whether he might have done it better, and whether he could have accomplished more. First, let it be noted as an essential point that the whole period of his tenure of the command-in-chief little exceeded three months. On the 6th of October, when he received his appointment, the mobilisation of his twenty thousand men in Lisbon had hardly been begun. Before the end of the month the whole of them were on march, though still only half-equipped ; and by the third week of November the entire army, with the exception of Hope's detachment and the artillery, had reached Salamanca. There Moore had expected to join forces with Baird at once ; but Baird's landing had been delayed for eleven days by the Galician Junta, and the last of his cavalry had not disembarked until the 13th of November, the very day on which Moore himself entered Salamanca. Hence the utmost that Baird could hope for was that his detachment should be concentrated at Astorga by the 28th. But meanwhile on the 10th Blake had been routed at Espinosa, and

Belvedere at Gamonal ; and on the 28th Castaños was 1809. utterly defeated at Tudela. The Spanish armies had come to an end, and with them the whole of the assumptions on which Moore's instructions had been based. One critic does indeed assert that Moore should have dragged his artillery over the mountains of Portugal instead of sending it round by Madrid, and that he ought to have had a compact force of all arms at Salamanca by the 15th of November ; in which case, even without Baird, he could have exercised some influence on the course of events.¹ Passing over the fact that the artillery could not have travelled over any road except that which it actually took, I confess that I cannot see how an advance upon Tudela or upon Madrid could possibly have mended matters. It would have been of no advantage to Moore to entangle himself with the Spaniards, and he would have equally been obliged to beat a precipitate retreat, though with diminished chances of escape, to say nothing of the risk of allowing himself to be beaten in detail.

On receiving the news of Tudela he decided that his presence in northern Spain was useless, and that it was his duty to retreat to Portugal, and from thence to embark for some other quarter. Beyond all question he was right, for his army could do little where it was, but might have been of untold value at Cadiz ; and the Government approved of his determination. Was he therefore wrong when, upon what was, after all, false intelligence, he reversed his decision, and determined to advance against Napoleon's communications ? The question is answered by a sentence in Moore's own journal : " I was aware that I risked infinitely too much." Judged purely from a military standpoint he was wrong, and he knew that he was wrong. The movement was in fact dictated wholly by political considerations ; and it may be doubted whether, but for his peculiar relations with Castlereagh and the Government, he would have undertaken it. But his position

¹ Oman, i. 598-599.

1809. was more than ordinarily difficult. The public had no more devoted, conscientious servant than Moore ; and yet a cursed fate had constantly thrown him into collision with Ministers. Since, after first treating him shamefully, they had then committed to him a most important command, he was more than usually anxious to justify their confidence in him by the best and most loyal service ; and yet the same fate had pursued him, and set him at variance with the Government's most trusted agent, Frere. To the Government, therefore, he sacrificed, as he thought, his military reputation. He did not deceive himself as to the peril of his movement ; on the contrary, while still uninformed as to the true strength of the French army, he described it to Frere as of the most dangerous kind. "I not only risk," he wrote, "to be surrounded every moment by superior forces, but to have my communications intercepted with the Galicias." Indeed, if good fortune had not placed in his hands Berthier's letter to Soult and caused him to change the direction of his march, it is hard to see how he could have escaped destruction.

Once informed as to the number and dispositions of the French troops, he moved with greater sureness and decision, though always prepared, in his own words, "to make a run for it." The Duke of Wellington said later that he saw no fault in Moore's campaign except that Sir John did not from the first consider his advance on Sahagun as a movement of retreat. The latest of Moore's foreign critics prefers the same indictment. The General, he says, should have organised a convenient and certain line of communications, with good roads and fixed points for crossing the rivers, through a country offering facilities for checking his pursuers upon occasion. Having once chosen his line of retreat, he should have selected suitable places at proper intervals for the accumulation of victuals, forage, and munitions in carefully calculated quantities. He should further have reconnoitred the roads leading to his port of embarkation and made preparations for destroying the bridges

so soon as he should have crossed them. This Moore 1809. omitted to do, and consequently he was the slave of his convoys and magazines. In some of his magazines he had amassed larger supplies than were needed; in others there was insufficiency; in none were to be found either forage or horse-shoes. Hence there was at once waste and want of victuals for the men, and absolute dearth, resulting in appalling mortality, among the horses. All of this was in great measure due to the General's irresolution, for it was not until he reached Lugo that he finally decided whether to embark at Coruña or Vigo.

Furthermore, objects the same critic, Moore chose the wrong line of retreat. He should have retired upon Portugal, where he would have been joined by Cradock's force and by from twenty to twenty-five thousand fairly good Portuguese troops, which would rapidly have improved. He would then have had sixty thousand troops under his hand, and could not only have defended Portugal, but might even have taken the offensive. Moreover, he would have possessed the great advantage of being able easily to feed his troops, being within reach of the sea and near the fleet; whereas the French, remote from their base and in a poor country, would have had the greatest difficulty in subsisting. Moore should therefore have retreated to Portugal while there was yet time, either by Salamanca or by Benavente and La Puebla de Sanabria, leaving Galicia open for the retreat of Romana.

Lastly, having selected the wrong line of retreat, Moore hurried his army backward with undue precipitatem, and finally weakened it to no purpose by detaching the two light brigades to Vigo.¹

It should seem, then, that Moore did nothing right; but a few observations may be permitted, even to a civilian, upon these comments of a learned and accomplished French officer. To take first the second matter, namely the choice of the line of retreat, it has been shown

¹ Balagny, iv. 514-522.

1808. that Moore, when he gave his first orders to retire on the 28th of November, had decided to fall back upon Portugal. He had, however, little hope of defending that country, the frontier being, as he said, everywhere open, without a fortress of any importance except Elvas. Moore was then at Salamanca. When he decided upon his final retreat he was at Sahagun, over eighty miles north-east of Salamanca, and Napoleon was advancing against him from the Guadarrama, from which two roads led due east upon Salamanca. Moore would therefore have given the Emperor the best possible chance of intercepting him, if he had retreated by the road of his advance. As to the route by La Puebla de Sanabria, it was, by the critic's own admission, impracticable in winter,¹ so that plainly Moore was right to avoid it. Moreover, it would have led him not into the main valley of the Minho, but into that of the Tamega, just short of which he would have had to turn south over very high ground to the valley of the Douro. Where and how he could have established magazines in this desolate region is a problem difficult of resolution.

Assuming, then, that Moore adopted the right line of retreat, it remains to examine the far more serious charge, that he neglected to make due provision for the orderly passage of his force, for victualling it at proper intervals, and for the destruction of the bridges after he had crossed the rivers. First, it must be remembered that Moore's line of retreat was also his line of operations for the offensive movement prescribed to him by Government; and that his supplies had been accumulated at various points with a view to that offensive movement. When on the 28th of November he gave Baird his first orders to retreat, he directed that General to send back his stores to Coruña at once, but gave him discretion to delay

¹ This statement is made by Commandant Balagny to prove that Moore might have made a stand at Astorga without danger of his position being turned. It is borrowed from Mr. Oman, who, however, more prudently says that the road "was almost impassable at mid-winter from the badness of the road and the deep snow." Balagny, iv. 433; Oman, i. 554.

the withdrawal of his main body. When on the 6th of December Sir John instructed Baird to return forthwith to Astorga, he cautioned him still to make all his preparations as if for a retreat, "in case that should again be necessary"; and he added the words so often quoted: "I mean to proceed bridle in hand; for if the bubble bursts and Madrid falls, we shall have a run for it." On that day, therefore, Moore was as yet uncertain whether he would not still need an advanced base for offensive operations. On the 12th of December he was not yet informed as to what had actually happened at Madrid, for, after he had decided to make his diversion against Napoleon's communications, he still wrote to Baird that its object was to relieve pressure on the capital. Not until the night of the 15th, when Berthier's intercepted letter fell into his hands, did Moore know the truth about Madrid and gain some inkling of the true strength of the French armies.

Could he then have reduced the accumulation of supplies and stores at Benavente to the extent of his actual requirements for the retreat? He endeavoured to do so, as also to send back to Villafranca those that had been collected at Astorga;¹ but, as he said, the roads were very bad, and the means of carriage scanty, and, if he were pressed, he would be obliged to sacrifice a part of his magazines. This he did after his return to Benavente on his retreat; from which it is perfectly evident that he could procure no transport, over and above the inadequate quantity already with his army, for the evacuation of that dépôt. Enormous masses of supplies and stores were accordingly destroyed, and the French reaped no benefit whatever from the British magazines at Benavente. The next stage in the retreat was Astorga, two marches distant; but here Baird had been able to gather only a little food, owing to the scarcity of flour,² though other stores in very large quantities had been collected there. The great com-

¹ Moore to Castlereagh, 28th Dec. 1808.

² Moore to Castlereagh, 16th Dec. 1808.

1809. plication, however, which arose at Astorga was that from this point Romana's line of operations was the same as Moore's, and that each of the two commanders claimed the right to use the road and to establish magazines upon it. Villafranca, the next stage beyond Astorga, contained fourteen days' supplies, part of them evidently brought back from Astorga itself, but carried no further to the rear owing to want of transport. The dearth of means of carriage had long been greatly felt in Galicia ; and to such transport as remained the Junta naturally claimed priority of right. Hence it was that, as we have seen, a convoy, which should have been employed in emptying the magazines of Villafranca and Lugo, was met by the British calmly proceeding eastward, into the jaws of the French, with stores for Romana. At Betanzos again was a large dépôt established solely for the use of Romana's army. On the other hand, dearth of transport equally forbade the collection of forage at different points along the line of retreat ; while the constant desertion of drivers and mules, beside the breakdown of waggons and draught-animals, disorganised all arrangements and upset all calculations. It may be questioned indeed whether hired transport, especially such hired transport as Moore had with infinite difficulty been able to scrape together, will ever stand the ordeal of a long retreat under constant pressure from an enemy.

French critics are disposed to be the more severe upon a General who is the slave of his convoys, because Napoleon's armies made, as far as possible, a practice of dispensing with them and living on the country. The British principle of paying for everything is so diametrically opposed to that of the French that it is unprofitable to compare the two systems ; but it is beyond question that the French army, though not without great suffering, contrived to follow the British with men and horses where Moore supposed that they would have been checked by starvation. To some extent the French were aided by the undestroyed

supplies in the British magazines, but apart from this 1809, they made shift, in their own marvellous fashion, not only to keep themselves and their horses alive, but to press the pursuit with the greatest activity. Allowance must be made for the vast difference in the moral condition of pursuers and pursued, particularly when the pursued consider themselves with some reason the better men in a pitched battle; but even so a tribute must be paid to the self-helpfulness and endurance of Soult's army in general and of his cavalry in particular. Nor can it be denied that though the members of Moore's headquarters staff were all capable men, the work of the divisional and brigade-staffs was extremely bad and defective. At a time when it was of vital importance that food and fuel should be ready for distribution to sulky and ill-tempered troops, very frequently no thought had been taken and no arrangements made. The destruction of the bridges again failed with discreditable frequency, through the inexperience of the engineers. In fact the whole army was raw to the work of an inland campaign; and matters which, to the French, were of elementary knowledge were absolutely strange to the British. It must be remembered also that Moore had not the time to set all these things right, and to train both officers and men. When he began his retreat, more than one-third of his army had not been under his immediate command for more than a fortnight.

As regards the reconnaissance of the line of retreat, Baird, who advanced by it, should have been, and possibly was, in a position to give full information. It was certainly due to Baird that Moore hesitated for so long between Coruña and Vigo as his place of embarkation. He despatched an officer to report upon the facilities offered by both harbours, as soon as ever he was aware that he must certainly retreat;¹ and on receiving this report at Lugo, as we have seen, he altered the direction of the march of his main body to Coruña. When one thinks of

¹ Moore Smith's *Life of John Colborne*, p. 397.

1809. all that Moore accomplished in three months, mobilising an army of forty thousand men, marching them four hundred miles into the heart of Spain, and retreating two hundred miles more to the coast, all in midwinter and with staff-officers of little or no experience, the marvel is not that he should have forgotten anything, but that he should have remembered so much. The man was at work morning, noon, and night, worried by false intelligence from Frere, Stuart, Romana, the Supreme Junta, and indeed from every one who should have given him good information, but hardly able to obtain correct news from any source. It is easy to accuse him of irresolution, but it is not so easy to conceive of the difficulties of a General who was almost morbidly anxious to do his best for the Government, who by his own military instinct perceived that he stood in great danger, yet was always assured by his informants that his duty was plain and his course perfectly clear.

From beginning to end of the campaign Moore lived insuspense. When he marched up from Portugal he never knew whether he might not be starved when he joined the Spanish armies ; and when the Spanish armies came to an end, he never discovered, till chance sent him a despatch from the enemy, how far resistance might still be expected from the Spanish people. The success of the greatest commanders has always been due in great measure to the excellence of their information. Most notably was this the case with Marlborough and with Napoleon. The latter was so impatient under suspense that, when the relief of Mantua was first threatened in 1796, he lost control of himself, and for a time took leave of all sober judgment. Moore's serenity under this hardest of trials was marvellous ; and the constant charges of hesitation and irresolution are made by those who take no account whatever of the extraordinary embarrassments of his position. He was conscious that the reversal of his first orders to retreat would lay him open to censure. "All this," he wrote to Baird, "appears very strange and unsteady." How

could it be otherwise, when his movements had to be 1809. based on that most incalculable of elements, a popular and tumultuary resistance to disciplined armies, and that by a people which refused to raise a finger for him while the French were at a distance, but defended open towns such as Toro and Zamora with desperate courage when the enemy actually threatened their hearths?

It must be added also that the misfortunes during the retreat were greatly increased not only by the incapacity of the staff, but by the disloyalty of officers, even those high in command. Wellington, after he had held command of the Peninsular army for four years, encountered precisely the same difficulties as Moore, when he retreated, in much easier circumstances, from Burgos in 1812. Military discipline among officers was very imperfectly defined both then and for some years later; and those officers who were also politicians, such as Craufurd and Charles Stewart, seem to have regarded it as their right not only to hold their own opinions of the Commander-in-chief's orders, but to express such opinions loudly, and even to act upon them. To them, in fact, the fountain of honour and promotion was not the Commander-in-chief, but some person, illustrious or obscure, at Whitehall. Wellington was enough of a politician himself to humour, though with occasional sharp bursts of recalcitrance, this perhaps inevitable evil, as is shown by his persistent honourable mention of most incompetent officers. But Moore, who had quarrelled with Ministers, was more easily defied than Wellington; and the resolute fashion in which he kept his own counsel and declined to be advised by men with not one-tenth of his own ability, promoted rather than discouraged the prevailing discontent. Moreover, quite apart from the officers, there were, according to Colborne's account, from fifty to one hundred bad characters in every battalion, whom no punishment could keep from straying from their comrades on the march, to rejoin the ranks in their own good time or not at all; and Colborne resolutely maintained that the

1809. straggling and disorganisation at the beginning of the retreat was confined to these men, and was not due to the extraordinary rapidity of the march.¹ Baird himself, by two egregious blunders, was probably responsible for more straggling than was any other officer in the army ; and it cannot be said that this campaign added to his military reputation. Paget, on the other hand, always held his division well in hand, even as Craufurd held his brigade ; and, as we have seen, they lost far fewer men than the divisions who led the retreat, though they did twice as much work.

Whether Moore was right or wrong in declining to offer battle until he reached Lugo, is a matter which a belated critic is not competent to decide. The General knew exactly what he wanted, and could best judge how his object would be attained. That his men would have welcomed a battle at any stage of the retreat is certain ; but it does not therefore follow that Moore would have been right to indulge them. He would have enjoyed a fight, if there had been any reasonable purpose to be gained thereby, as much as any man ; and that he refused to engage in one, when he thought it inexpedient, is rather to his credit than otherwise. Again, he alone was the best judge whether his march should at times have been hurried or not. When an army degenerates into a mob, only the commander who is with the men can judge whether it is best to drive them on or to halt them. " I couldn't have believed it possible," wrote Moore, " had I not witnessed it, that a British army could in so short a time have been so completely disorganised. Its conduct has been infamous beyond belief." He knew the British soldier better than did any other man of his time ; and it is not for us, after a century has passed, to dictate how in such circumstances the British army should have been handled. That there were cruel hardships, heart-rending scenes, and terrible suffering during the retreat there can be no doubt whatever ; but more than usual

¹ Moore Smith's *Life of John Colborne*, p. 396.

was said about them, not only because the whole campaign was at first considered to be a disaster, but also in order to furnish a very inadequate excuse for the general misconduct of the army. If Moore had been able, as he intended, to refresh his troops at Vigo before embarking them, and had brought them home clean and tidy, much less would have been heard of the horrors of the retreat, which after all was far less severe than that from Holland to the Ems in 1795. In reality the whole of the army's misconduct was due to one thing, and to one thing only, that the troops in their ignorance wished to advance, whereas the General meant to retire. Moore, from the very nature of the case and from no fault of his own, was bound to retreat, sooner or later, on pain of utter destruction ; and the army, which felt confident of its mettle and powers, was therefore bound to be ill-tempered.¹ Its ill-temper found innumerable voices, the loudest of which was that of Charles Stewart, who, over and above the criticism to be found in his memoirs, wrote privately to his brother Castlereagh that he would rather have sacrificed half of the army than turned back without striking a blow for Spain. It is time to dismiss all such nonsense as this, together with the foolish criticisms of Moore that are based upon it. If half of Moore's army had been destroyed in Spain in the winter of 1808, there would have been no brilliant campaign of Portugal in 1809.

Lastly, Moore must not be judged only by the three months during which he held supreme direction of an army in the field, though in my judgment his conduct throughout this period in a maze of unexampled difficulties entitles him to a very high place among our

¹ An exactly parallel case was seen in one of our comparatively recent campaigns on the Nile. One very fine battalion, with incredible labour, distanced all its competitors in the race up the river ; but, arriving too late for service, was compelled to retreat without the chance of firing a shot. Though it suffered no particular hardship during the retrograde movement, it marched back, as I have been assured by an eye-witness, an undisciplined mob, in no order and under no control—the result of sheer bad temper.

1809. military commanders. His worth must be reckoned by a review of his whole career, and by the testimony of his contemporaries. He fought through many campaigns. In the first of them he distinguished himself as a subaltern, and in all that followed he was not only prominent but eminent as the officer who, next to the Commander-in-chief, played the most important part. Whether it was as regimental officer or divisional general, whether it was in Corsica, the West Indies, North Holland, or Egypt, the story was always the same ; Moore did the best of the work. Finally, when his turn came for supreme command, he contrived to mobilise an army with amazing speed, to make such marches as we have seen, and incidentally to dislocate the whole of Napoleon's combinations.

This is sufficient to prove his powers in the field ; but Moore was even greater in the camp. Beyond all question he was the very best trainer of troops that England has ever possessed. His system, whether applied to a single regiment, or to the Light Brigade which he made so perfect at Shorncliffe in 1804, rested on one principle, that every officer should know his duty and do it, and should teach his men their duty likewise. In Sicily during March 1807 he inspected his own regiment, the Fifty-second. "Their movement in the field is perfect," he wrote with pride ; "it is evident that not only the officers, but that each individual soldier, knows perfectly what he has to do ; the discipline is carried on without severity, the officers are attached to the men, and the men to the officers." It was on these lines that he trained his Light Brigade. The details of the actual movements in which he exercised them are immaterial ; the essence of his training was the cultivation in all ranks of that self-reliance which springs from knowledge. Moore would not permit a battalion to depend for its efficiency merely upon the chance possession of a good commanding officer or a good adjutant. Every colonel must be able to teach his captains, every captain his subalterns, every

subaltern his men. He recognised that, if officers are ^{1809.} to feel an interest in their men, they must each one be trusted with responsibility for them. Once this was accomplished, the troops could be employed as light infantry, that is to say in dispersed order, the colonel content to leave each company to its own officers, and the men confident alike in their captains, their subalterns, and above all in themselves. Though the strictest of disciplinarians, Moore encouraged to the utmost the intelligence and initiative of the individual ; treating soldiers as men and not as machines ; yet as a commanding officer looking most carefully to the comfort and well-being of all. In Corsica, for instance, his regimental hospital left all others far behind in the excellence of its arrangements. He had, in fact, a real genius for organisation ; while the long roll of successful generals, governors, and administrators that was drawn from the Light Division sufficiently proves his extraordinary power of training men.

Yet even this does justice to but one half of the man, for his grasp of great affairs was as thorough as of the smallest regimental details. Moore's intellect would have dwarfed that of many a statesman, so called, and his remarkable insight and sagacity never failed him, whether in Ireland or in the Mediterranean, in Egypt or in Spain. He had the defects of these qualities ; above all, an extreme faculty for intellectual contempt ; but these were outweighed by his sterling integrity and unselfish devotion to the public service. Not many men would have placed such restraint upon themselves as did Moore when he went out to serve under Burrard, or when he abstained from comment upon Frere's foolish and insulting letters. Perhaps, however, his greatest failing, as man and as soldier, was his want of good luck. He rarely went into action without being wounded ; and he was employed, when he rose to high command, on a succession of fools' errands, first in Egypt in 1807, which, at Fox's entreaty, he declined, then in Sweden, and finally in Spain. There is no

1809. higher trial for a man's temper and character than to be entrusted with the direction of business after business that is foredoomed, by no fault of his own, to failure.

Finally must be noticed the extraordinary personal charm, which made him one of the most fascinating figures of his day. Singularly handsome in feature, tall and powerful but graceful in body, nimble and active on foot, an excellent horseman in the saddle, Moore had the most striking appearance of any officer in the Army. Nor was this outward seeming belied by the nobility of the mind within ; for he was perfectly pure, perfectly gentle, perfectly honest, perfectly fearless, perfectly true. To impostors and charlatans his keen glance was terrible ; but no man possessed a more irresistible faculty of winning hearts. All ranks of the army adored him, from the private to the general. The men might behave ill on the march, but at the moment of action their question was, "Where is the General ?" Even a somewhat small and carping spirit, such as Charles Stewart, wrote amid all his petty criticisms, "I love Moore" ; and greater men gave him not only love, but the homage due to none but the highest. "He was a king of men," wrote Charles Napier. "A most extraordinary man," wrote Colborne ; "the nearer you saw him the more he was admired ; he had a magnificent mind. He was superior by many degrees to every one I have seen." "Never fell a more perfect soldier and gentleman," wrote Graham. Colborne to the end of his life could not speak of him without a break in his voice ;¹ and Lord Lynedoch, describing him twenty-five years after Coruña to a schoolboy,² who had asked to be told about Sir John Moore, stopped suddenly in the midst of his narrative and burst into tears. Soult, with generous admiration, ordered a monument to be

¹ Moore Smith's *Life of John Colborne*, p. 115.

² The writer's father, who was fifteen at that time, and who never forgot the eager enthusiasm with which the veteran spoke of his hero, until suddenly choked by tears. Lord Lynedoch was then eighty-two or three years old.

set over Moore's grave at Coruña ; and the Spanish Government has recently raised another with a laudatory inscription in his honour ; but his memory is more safely enshrined in the verses of Charles Wolfe and in the eloquent prose of William Napier. Nevertheless, if not a stone had been raised nor a line written, his work would still remain with us ; for no man, not Cromwell, nor Marlborough, nor Wellington, has set so strong a mark for good upon the British Army as John Moore.

NOTE

The principal authorities for the story of the Peninsular War, so far as it has been narrated, are, on the English side, the original papers in the Record Office, W.O. (1) 226, 228 ; (6) 46-48 ; Wellington's despatches, and the histories of Napier and Mr. Oman ; on the Spanish, those of Toreño and Arteche ; on the French, Balagny's *Campagne de l'Empereur Napoléon en Espagne*. The minor authorities, such as the narratives of Harry Smith, Kincaid, Surtees, and their like on the English side, and of St. Chamans, Fantin des Odoards, etc., on the French side, I have quoted in my footnotes. I must acknowledge to the full my very special obligations to Mr. Oman's work, which, even when I have not followed it, I have found of the greatest value.

NOTE ON THE RETURNS OF THE LOSSES IN THE CORUÑA CAMPAIGN IN MR. OMAN'S "HISTORY OF THE PENINSULAR WAR," i. 646.

It is greatly to be regretted that these returns, for purposes of ascertaining the *casualties* of the campaign, prove upon close inspection to be of doubtful value ; though they seem to be the best that lie open to Mr. Oman, or indeed to any one, and are therefore to be welcomed for what they are worth. It will be noticed that the whole of the cavalry disembarked more men in England in January than were present at Mayorga on 19th Dec. 1808. This is easily accounted for by the fact that the dismounted men, who were left at Lisbon, are reckoned in the total after disembarkation in England ; and the casualties may be therefore approximately correct, though they may also include men who died in hospital at Lisbon. But, to take another instance, the 42nd Highlanders, according to Mr. Oman's figures, numbered 918 rank and file in October 1808 ; 880 on 19th Dec. ; and 757 when they disembarked in England in January 1809. Mr. Oman returns their deficiency at 161, the difference between 757 and 918. The regimental history of the 42nd gives the casualties

of the regiment in the action of Coruña alone at 193 killed and wounded. Mr. Oman states the figure (quite possibly with correctness) at 133. But the difference between the figures on 19th Dec. 1808 and on disembarkation in January 1809 amount to only 123, or less than the casualties in the action alone. Again the 2/52nd numbered 623 rank and file in October 1808, had 381 present at Mayorga in December, and disembarked 462 men in January 1809. Its deficiency therefore is set down at 161 men (the difference between 462 and 623), an appalling loss on a total of 381—the number that apparently went through the campaign—particularly in an excellent regiment trained by Moore himself. Again the strength of 1/52nd in October 1808 is given by Mr. Oman at 862; on 19th Dec. at 828; and in January 1809 at 719; and the deficiency is set down at 143. But Moorhouse's *History of the 52nd* says explicitly that the losses of this battalion from all causes, up to and including the 16th January, was 104 rank and file. Moreover, it appears that 4 officers and 133 rank and file of the two battalions of the 52nd were left at Lisbon and did not return to England in January; and that nevertheless the 2/52nd contrived to disembark more men in January than were present with it at Mayorga in December. Yet again the deficiency in the 28th is given by Mr. Oman at 239; but Cadell's regimental history states the number of the missing at 132 N.C.O.s and men. Without going into further analysis, I think that the returns are too uncertain to permit the number of men deficient in each regiment to be treated, as by Mr. Oman (i. 565 n.), as an index of the behaviour of that regiment during the retreat.

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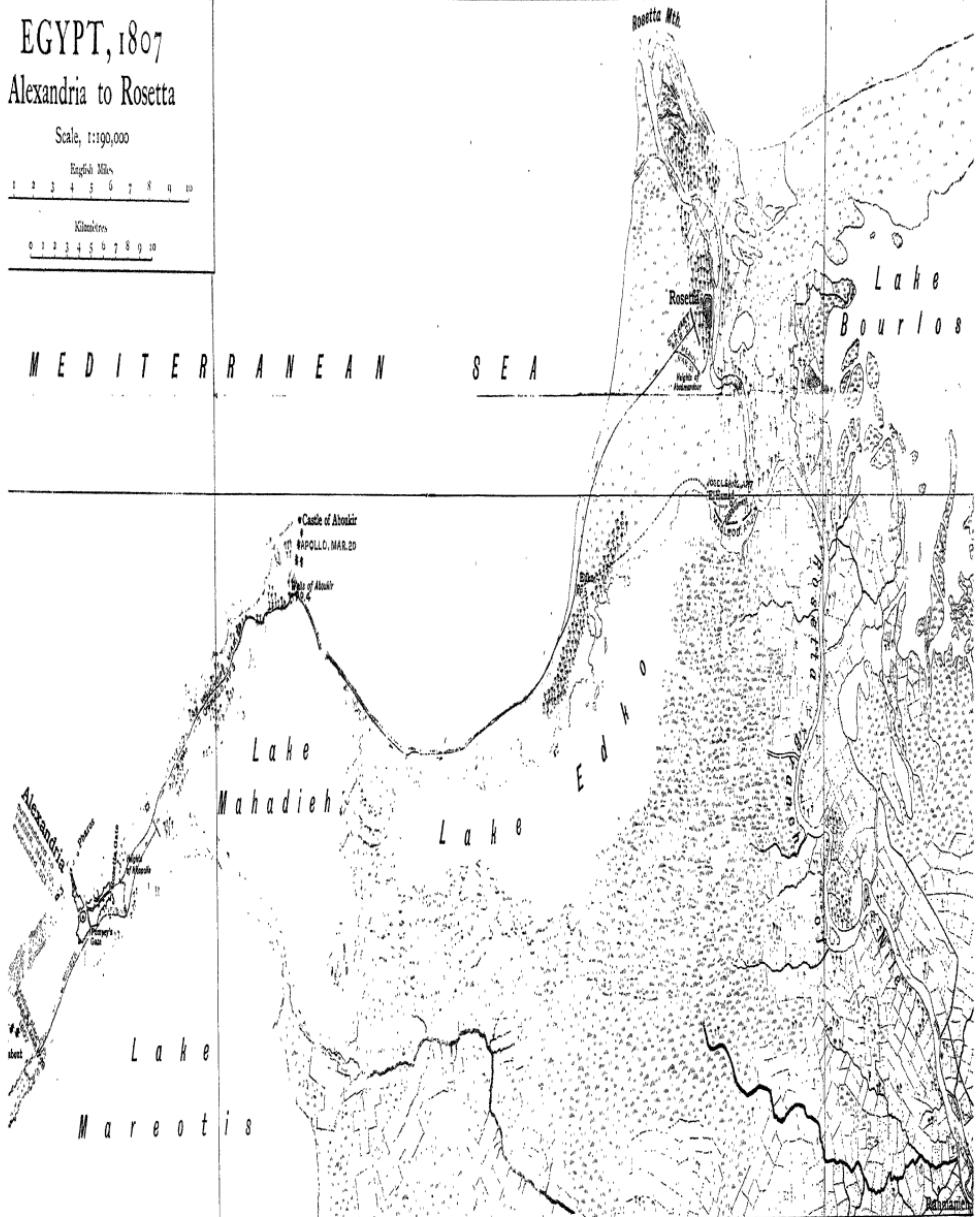
EGYPT, 1807
Alexandria to Rosetta

Scale, 1:190,000

English Miles
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Kilometres
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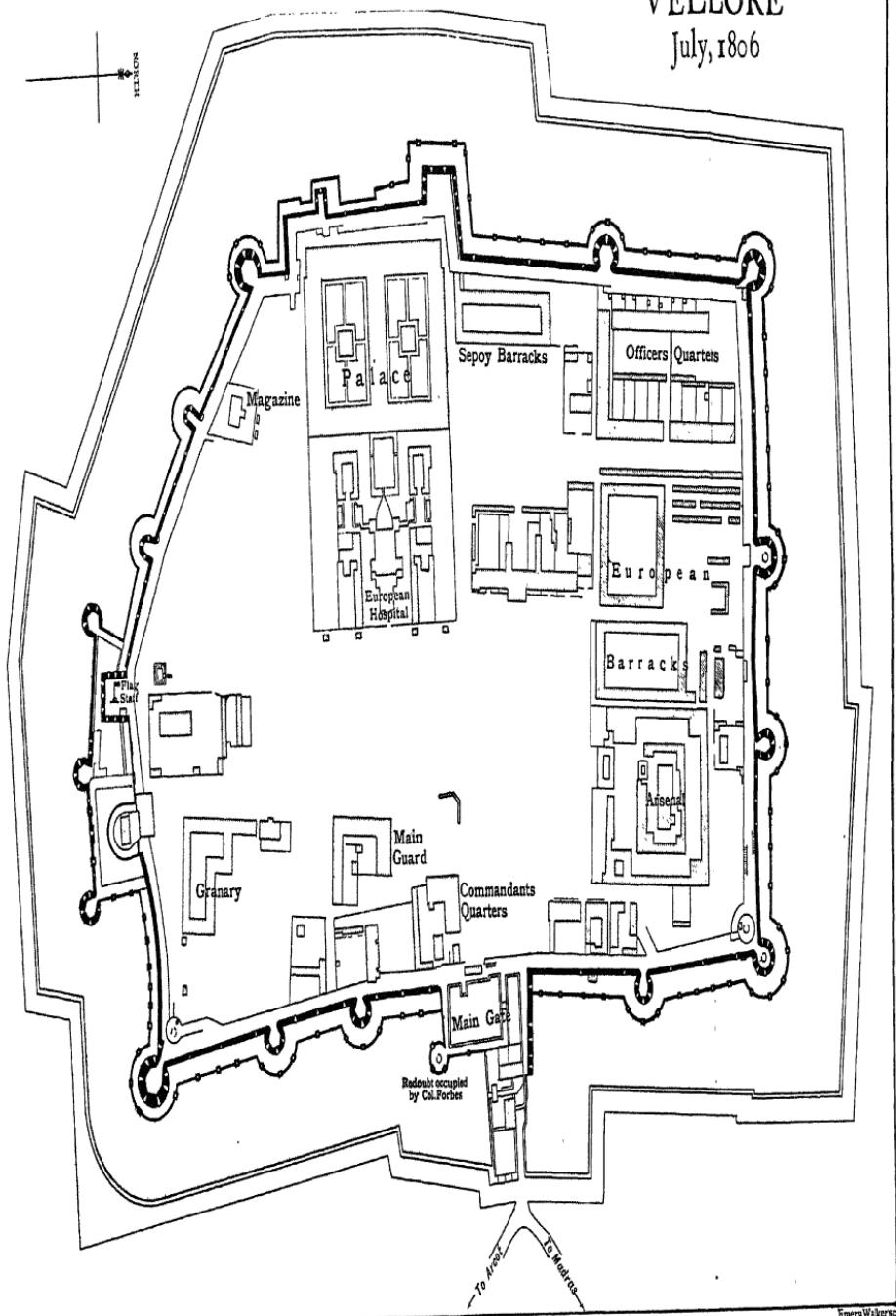


Longitude East of Greenwich

Sheet VI

VELLORE

July, 1806



COPENHAGEN

August, 1807

Scale, 1:150,000

English Miles

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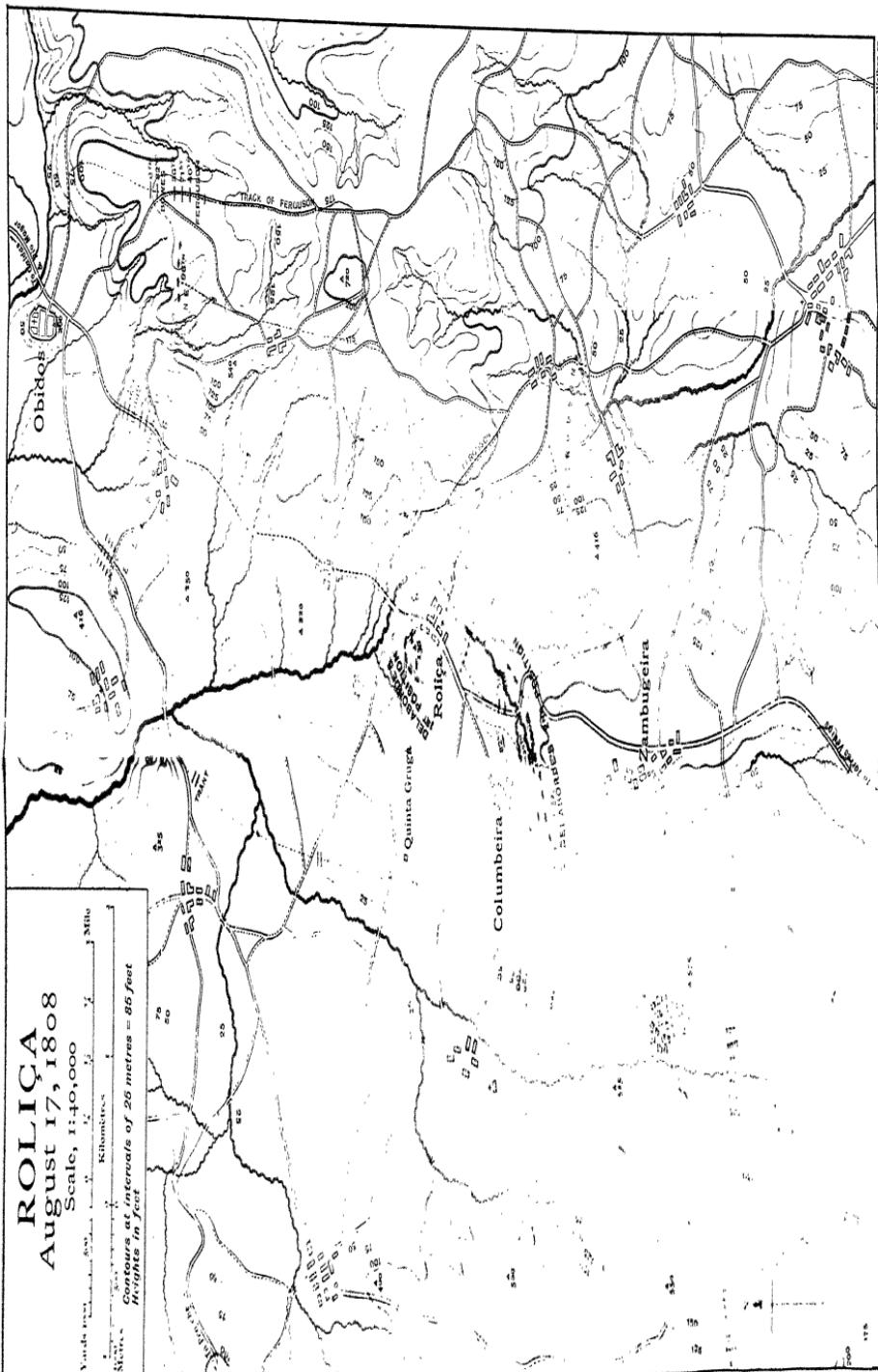
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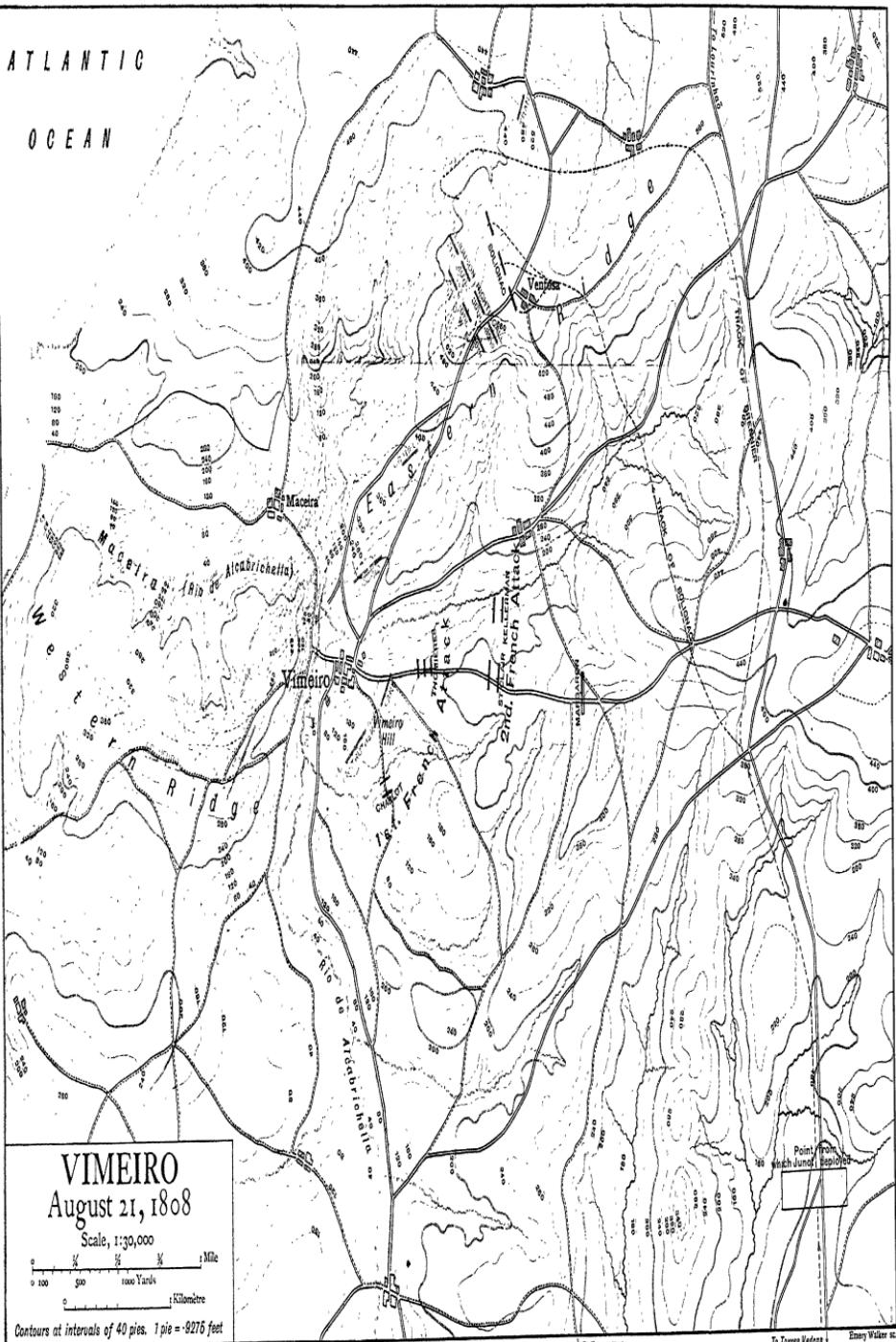
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ATLANTIC
OCEAN



VIMEIRO
August 21, 1808

Scale, 1:30,000

0 100 500 1000 Yards
0 Kilometre

Contours at intervals of 40 paces. 1 pace = 8275 feet

British 1st Position — British 2nd Position - - -

French 1st Position — French 2nd Position - - -

To Torres Vedras □ To Torres Vedras

To Torres Vedras □ Emery Walker St.

CORUÑA

Coruña

Harbour

Heights of Santa María

Moncada

Chu

Ota

Chu

Ota

Chu

Ota

Chu

Ota

Coruña Bay

Monte de Meisiro

Heights of Peñascudo

CORUÑA

Jan. 16, 1809

Scale, 1:24,500

Scale of One Mile

0 $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ 1

Scale of One Kilomètre

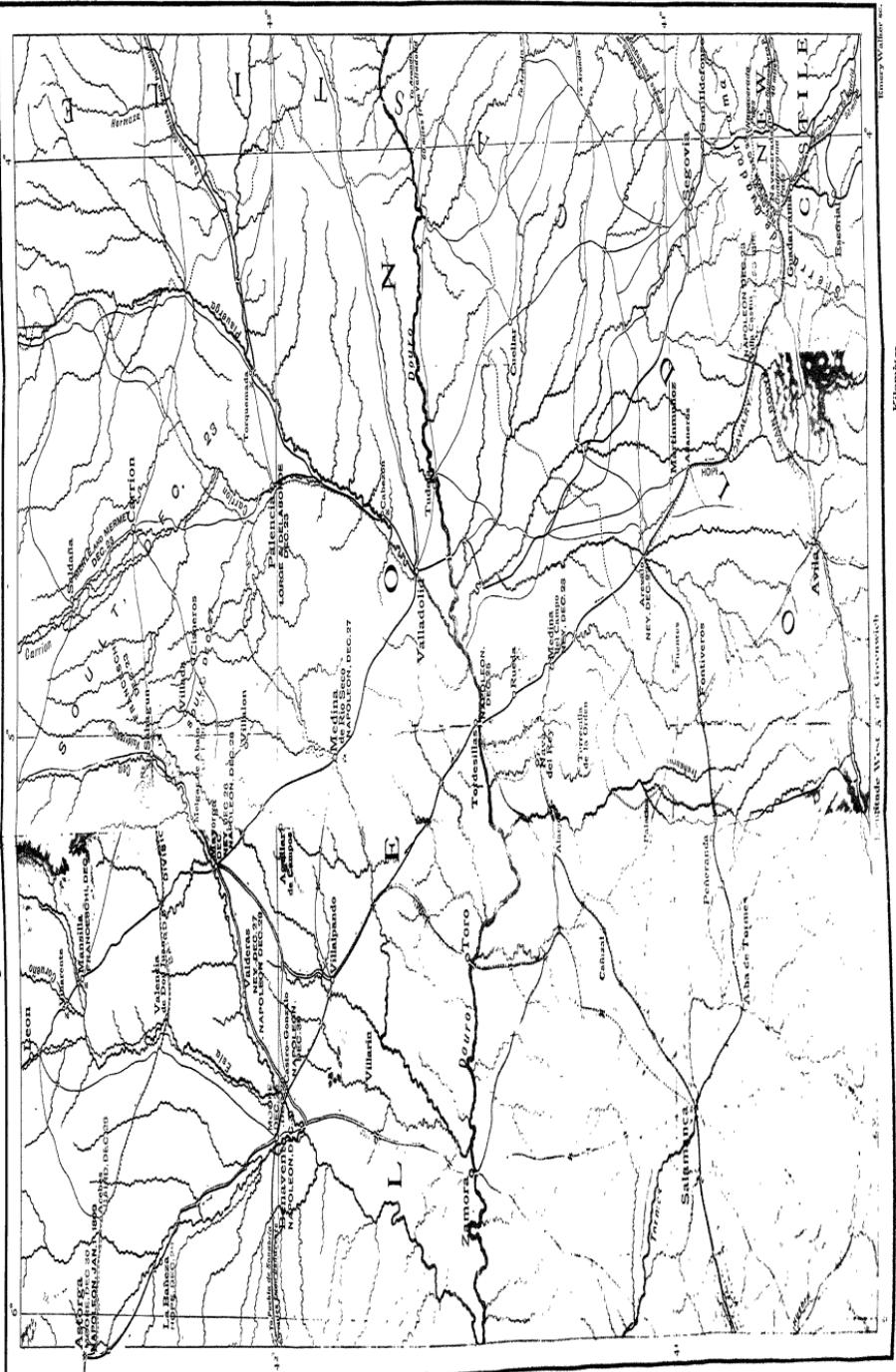
0 100 200 300 400 500 Mètres

Contours at Intervals of 40 paces. 1 pie = 9275 feet

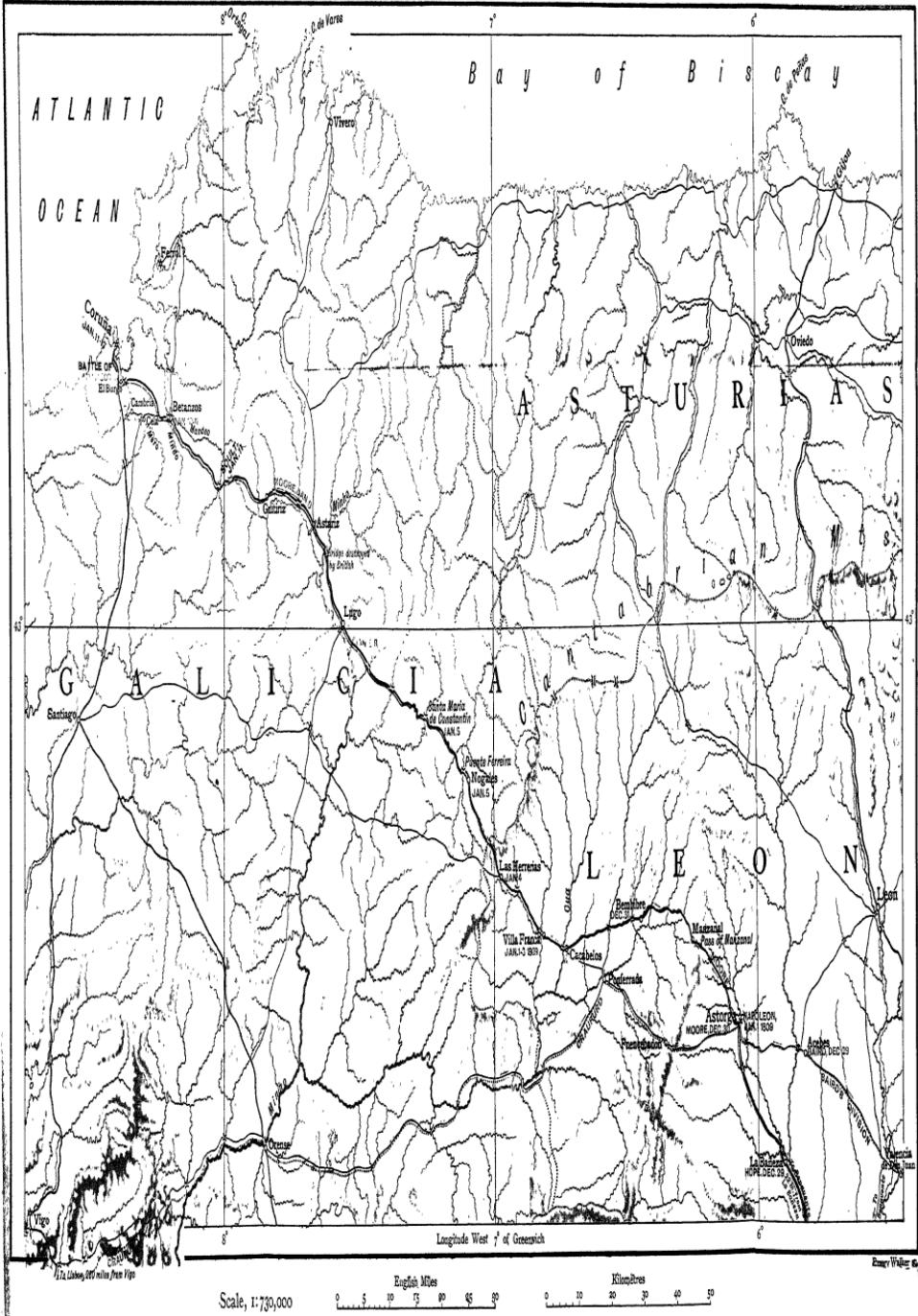
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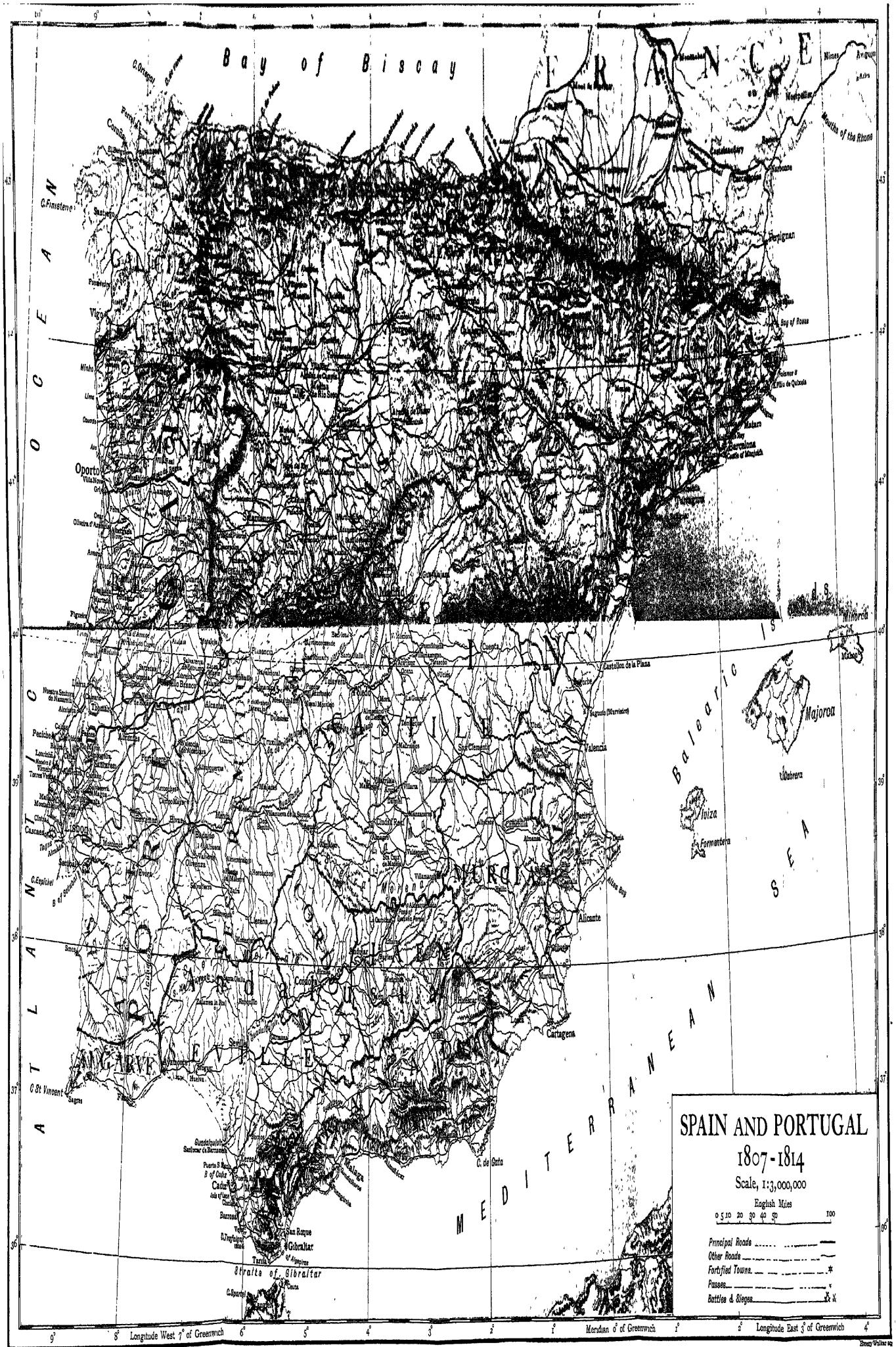
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